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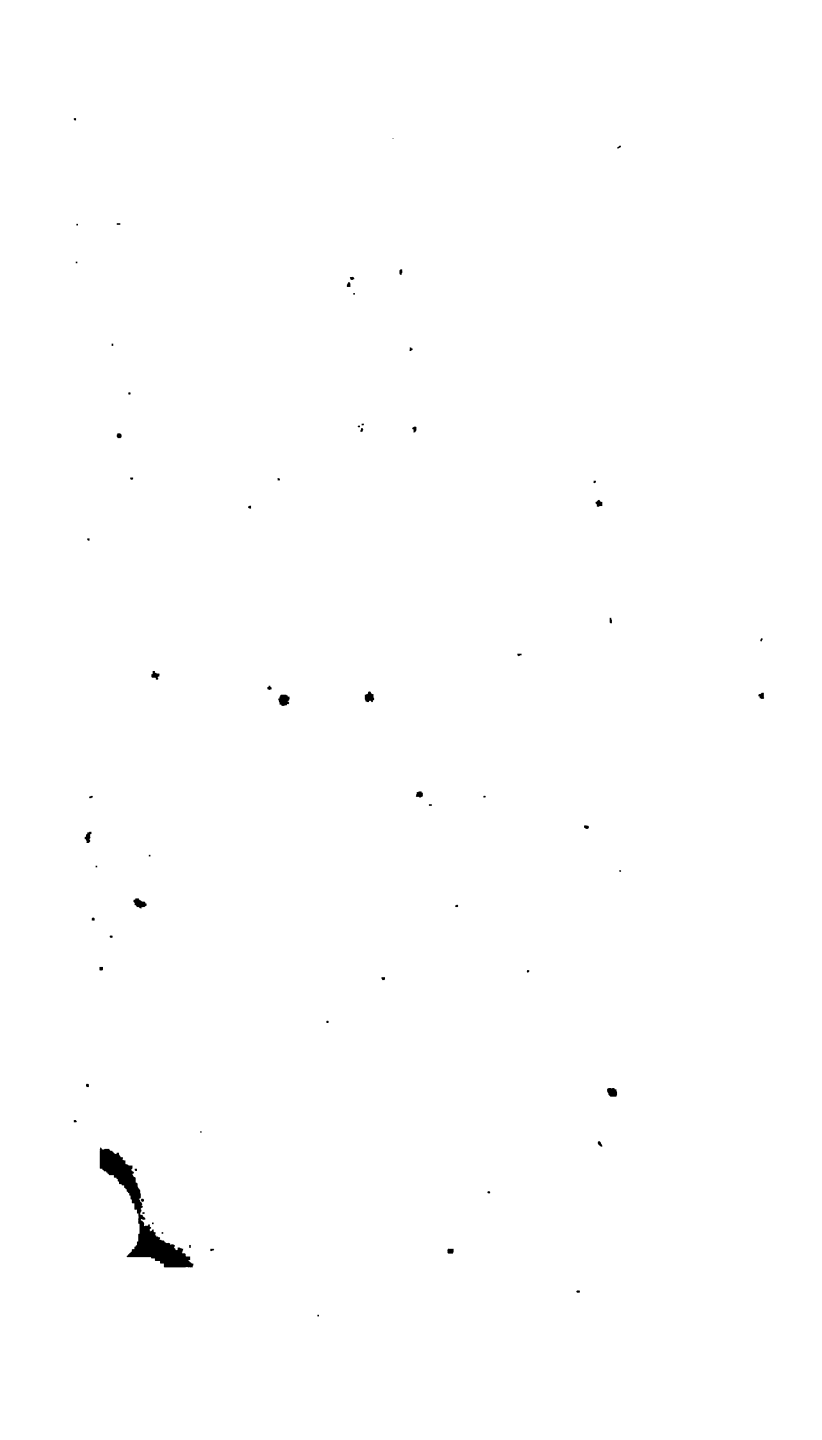








Mrs. Carlton  
Book 16



THE  
**CHRISTIAN'S**  
**INSTRUCTOR INSTRUCTED;**  
CONTAINING REMARKS UPON A  
LATE PUBLICATION

OF THE  
REV. JOSIAH HOPKINS, A. M.  
PASTOR OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,  
IN NEW-HAVEN, VT.

WITH  
**A SHORT APPENDIX,**  
CONTAINING EXTRACTS FROM THE ARTICLES  
OF  
**ADDISON CONSOCIATION,**  
WITH  
BRIEF REMARKS UPON THEM.

BY NOAH LEVINGS, MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL.

*"If they speak not according to this word,  
It is because there is no light in them,"*  
ISAIAH.

**Putnamburgh:**

PRINTED BY J. W. COPELAND.

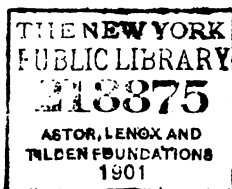
1827.

293

The following typographical errors have escaped notice, partly from the author's not being able to examine all the proof-sheets himself.

### ERRATA.

- Page 30, twelfth line from bottom, for *decrease*, read *decrees*.  
" 49, fourth line from bottom, for *sourly*, read *surely*.  
" 109, top line, for *our*, read *sour*.  
" 109, eighth line from bottom, for *demand*, read *advanced*.  
" 110, fifteenth line from top, for *consistent*, read *inconsistent*.



District of Vermont, to wit:

BE IT REMEMBERED, That, on the Fifteenth Day of March, in the Fifty-first Year of the Independence of the United States of America, Noah Levings, of the said District, hath deposited in this Office, the title of a book, the right whereof, he claims as Author, in the words following, to wit: "The Christian's Instructor Instructed; containing remarks upon a late publication of the Rev. Josiah Hopkins, A. M. Pastor of the Congregational Church in New-Haven, Vt. with a short Appendix, containing extracts from the Articles of the Addison Consociation, with brief remarks upon them. By Noah Levings, Minister of the Gospel. 'If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.' Isaiah." In conformity to the Act of the Congress of the United States, entitled "an Act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts, and Books, to the Authors and Proprietors of such copies, during the times therein specified."

JESSE GOVE,

Clerk of the District of Vermont.

A true copy of record, examined and sealed by me.

J. GROVE, Clerk.

## PREFACE.

---

FROM the darkness of the human understanding, and from the limited state of human knowledge in this life, arise a great variety of opinions in matters of religion. These opinions have unhappily divided the Christian world into a great number of denominations; each of which, lay claim to orthodoxy, and appeal to the word of God in support of their sentiments. And it is among the most happy considerations, that such is the enlightened state of civil and religious liberty, that every denomination has the unalienable right to propagate its peculiar sentiments, provided those sentiments do not disturb the order and harmony of civil society.

It was doubtless from this view of the subject, that Mr. *Hopkins* saw proper to advance his peculiar sentiments to the public; and it is from the same view, in part, that we have taken the liberty of opposing such of them as are deemed by the author to be heterodox. As Mr. *Hopkins* (in those parts in which we oppose him) has only advanced doctrines and arguments perhaps a hundred times stated, and as often refuted, it was only necessary in opposing them, to adduce a few of the arguments which have so often been used with good success.

Hence it is not pretended, that any thing particularly *new*, or that has not in substance before been advanced, will be found in the following work. Nor must the reader expect in a work like this, (which is purely controversial) to find the subjects mentioned, so fully, or so methodically treated as he would have reason to expect, were it written under different circumstances.

DUP. EXCH. 27 MAR. 1901

DREW THEOL. SEM.



The author's principal object has been, to draw off the artful coverings of error, and present the absurdities of his opponent's system candidly before the public—believing that the system he opposes needs only to be *honestly* examined to be disapproved. With regard to the execution of the following work, the author is aware that it contains many imperfections. These arose from different causes.—1. The want of greater literary qualifications for such an undertaking.—2. Want of time and retirement—having to travel constantly, and preach almost daily, and take the oversight of an extensive circuit.—3. From want of the aid of other authors; it being impracticable in his unsettled situation, to have a library always at hand. Considering these things, it certainly might be expected (as report says Mr. Hopkins has stated) that “we should have our hands full if we answer his book:” but whether we have or have not, we leave for others to judge. If he knows his own heart, the author's main object has been, to oppose error, defend the truth, and to the extent of his limited abilities, serve the cause of God. Should this be accomplished in any degree, his most sanguine expectations will be realized.

Finally, there can be no danger in opposing the Calvinistic system; for if it is *true*, our opposition is an *event* included in the eternal *purpose* or *decree* of God, and of course is right; and if it is *false*, we certainly do right in opposing it, our opponents themselves being judges.

N. LEVINGS,

Monkton, Dec. 2, 1826.

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THE  
CHRISTIAN'S INSTRUCTOR  
INSTRUCTED.

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CHAPTER I.

*On the Universal Government of God.*

WHOEVER carefully peruses the four first, and some other sections of the "Christian's Instructor," lately published by the Rev. Josiah Hopkins, of New-Haven, Vt. will find some of the most important doctrines of our holy religion; and although there is nothing materially *new*, either in sentiment or proof, yet it is matter of rejoicing that on some of the most essential doctrines different denominations are agreed.

In my remarks, therefore, I shall confine myself chiefly to what are deemed the exceptionable parts of that work.

A few reflections on the Divine character may serve as a further introduction to our remarks.—God is infinite in all his divine attributes. By this is meant, that he is unbounded by any but himself. Every view we take of the operations of the Supreme Being in his vast dominions, shows that each attribute holds a distinguished rank in the divine character; so that the most perfect harmony is manifest, and an eternal equilibrium preserved throughout the whole. To be a little more explicit: such is the *truth* of God, that it is *impossible* for him to lie. Heb. vi. 18.

God is Almighty, yet he does not do all that omnipotence is capable of doing; and the reason is obvious, it is inconsistent with wisdom and goodness. So wisdom is capable of devising a way by which every child of fallen Adam should *unavoidably* be saved; but justice and the relation which man sustains to God as a free and accountable agent, render it inconsistent except upon the conditions of the gospel. Thus also, we see not why divine justice might not have doomed all our fallen race to endless woe and misery; but goodness and mercy rendered such a step inconsistent, till a probation or state of trial should be granted to all who are capable of being the subjects of a moral government; and, such is the divine benevolence, that the salvation of all others, (say infants and idiots,) is secured unconditionally.— The same principle of reasoning will apply in every view we take of the divine character; nor is the conclusion just from hence, that God is at war with himself, while every attribute harmonizes with the rest in every step of the divine procedure. Nor yet again is it just to conclude from hence, that God acts from any other necessity than what is the result of the most consummate perfection.

Keeping these remarks in view, let us proceed to an examination of the fifth section of the work before us. This section is entitled "*Universal government of God*;" in it we have two doctrines distinct in their natures, (and I think sources too,) so mixed and interwoven with each other, that they are rather calculated to bewilder than to *instruct*. On this account, and to make what I have to remark on this subject plain and distinct, I shall consider it in two parts.

First, in answer to the question, "What are we to understand by the universal government of God?" it is stated to be, "That universal and infinitely wise arrangement, and effectual control of every event, by which he will secure his

own glory, and promote the greatest possible good of the universe."

As Mr. Hopkins professes to be a firm believer in the free agency of man, it is presumed he would not be understood by the above statement, that God, by any "arrangement" or "control," impairs in the least man's freedom, upon which his accountability rests; and if so, all he has said, (*which adheres to this sentiment,*) is no more than every believer in the Bible would cheerfully admit. That God does by a most wise, holy, and universal providence, govern the world, is at once a most important and comfortable truth of our holy religion. But what a pity that a doctrine so true in itself, and so important both to the character of God, and the happiness of man, should be united with, and made the channel of conveyance to one of the most pernicious errors that was ever proposed for the reception of the public. This error is the more dangerous, 1. because it is revived and propagated by a good man, and a public teacher of religion. 2. Because it is so blended with truth that is the more likely to take with the incautious reader. It may be proper here to state how far we consider that the overruling providence of God extends its influence in the government of the world of rationals.

Having created man a free and accountable agent, the Lord determined to treat him as such.—This being granted, no one, it is presumed, will assert that it is possible for God to cross this line of administration, and exert any influence upon man which would in any measure destroy his accountability. This line of the divine conduct must remain unalterable, though the whole world should perish; for it is founded in the very nature and fitness of things, and the very existence of it shows that it originated in the most consummate wisdom. Considering this principle then as one of the immoveable

pillars of the divine administration, we suppose that God, by a most wise and holy providence, does so restrain and govern wicked men, and devils, in the affairs of nations, families, and individuals, as to secure his own glory, and promote the greatest possible good of the universe *under existing circumstances*. Since sin has been introduced by man, infinite goodness prompts the Deity to take every advantage that can be consistent with his moral government of the world, to secure his own glory, and promote the greatest possible good. But this, it is presumed, is by no means the greatest possible good that would have resulted from the continual obedience of man to the first covenant. I should consider myself in a difficult spot indeed, were I reduced to the necessity of supposing that the All wise and great Jehovah was dependent on the introduction of the very thing which he had prohibited on pain of eternal damnation, for the security of his own glory, and the greatest possible good of the universe! From this view of the subject, we may safely conclude that God, without having any thing to do with *producing* the sin of Joseph's brethren, might, when that sin was produced, overrule their conduct for his own glory, and the greatest possible good. The same remark will be found just in every view we take of the divine administration. I conclude then from the whole, that Mr. Hopkins will not find such "violent hostilities," and "unreasonable prejudices" against *this branch* of doctrine as he was aware he should.

The second, and exceptionable point, and the one Mr. H.\* labours especially to prove, is what I shall take the liberty to call *decrees*, or *fore-ordination*. I think myself warranted in the use of the former of these terms at least, as Mr. H. (page 163,) uses the same when speaking of the section under

---

\* I take the liberty of using the letter H. for the name of Mr. Hopkins, as it will save both time and labour.

consideration. We learn from this that "universal government of God," is only another word for decrees or foreordination. But why this perpetual shift of terms? Doubtless it is among the movements of an ecclesiastical policy, so conspicuous at the present day; by which more inoffensive terms are substituted for those which once would have passed very well but of late years have become unpopular. It is doubtless from the dictates of this policy, that so few of the *printed* Articles of the Congregational Churches are to be found among the people. Those churches, (as far as I have been able to learn,) have been formed upon articles drawn up at the time, and in as inoffensive terms, and in as accommodating a manner as possible. Hence the term "*governs* his creatures," is sometimes used, and at others the term "*controls*" is made use of. Let all know however, who are about to join the church, that however soft and plausible the terms are which are used, the *sentiment* is the same. Those persons are therefore very much deceived, who say that the articles of the church to which *they belong* are not tinctured with the offensive doctrine of Calvinistic decrees; for what they call the government of God, is, by their own confession, the same as decrees of God. But let us come more particularly to our purpose.

It seems that Mr. H. thinks himself able to prove to "mathematical demonstration," that God wills the existence of every event. Now as *every event* must include sin, (if sin be an event,) it is presumed that Mr. H. will not deny but that it is his sentiment, and the sentiment contained in his book, that for the security of his own glory, and the greatest possible good of the universe, God wills the existence of sin. Now for the proof.

The first argument by which he attempts to prove this doctrine, is drawn from a view of the divine perfections,—

He says, "If the great Jehovah is infinite in wisdom, it is certain that he must *know* what events it is best on the whole should exist. If he be infinite in power, it is certain that he is able to *produce* every such event, and to prevent the existence of every other." There are two radical defects in this argument. 1. Mr. H. takes for granted what remains to be proved; viz. that infinite wisdom saw it to be best on the whole, that sin should exist;—whereas infinite wisdom saw it to be best on the whole that sin should not exist, and therefore forbade the commission of it on pain of eternal death. Gen. iii. 17. The existence of sin forms no argument that infinite wisdom saw it to be best that it should exist; for the same mode of reasoning would prove that God not only wills, but actually "*produces*" all the wickedness in the universe! But the divine prohibition is an argument that infinite wisdom saw it to be best that sin should not exist; for this mode of reasoning proves that God not only willed that sin should not exist, but also, that it is that thing in the *production* of which he has no hand. 2. The second defect in the above argument is, that the whole proceeds upon the supposition, that infinite power could have prevented the introduction of sin, although infinite wisdom had determined to treat man as a free agent; thus setting the Divine Being at war with himself. In other words, notwithstanding infinite wisdom saw "it to be best on the whole," to create man a free agent, and treat him as such; yet infinite power could cross this line of the divine administration, and reduce him to a mere machine! I am aware that Mr. H. anticipates this last conclusion (page 77,) as drawn from his system, and that he thinks it unjust too, but we must beg leave to dissent from him in relation to the justness of the above conclusion.

These defects clearly discover the weakness of the argument; and of course the doctrine built upon it is unfounded.

Moreover, this doctrine, were it true, would go to say, that God is designedly the author of all the abominations which mark the moral conduct of men, or devils in the present life. For the fair conclusion from the Rev. gentleman's argument is, that the Almighty *produces* either directly or indirectly, all the violations of his own law that take place. Now if he produces sin, he is properly the author of it; and then how is he to judge the world in righteousness? It is not unfrequently the case that Calvinist divines deny that they believe God to be the author of sin; but they either do believe it, or, are much divided among themselves. But I am led to believe that they are not divided among themselves, but all to a man, firmly believe that God does directly, or by proxy, "*produce*" all sin! In what a light does this doctrine present the divine character! "Tell it not in Gath," that a Christian minister indirectly asserts, that God produces drunkenness, lying, swearing, adultery, murder, &c. "lest the uncircumcised rejoice!"

As the above arguments will apply with equal propriety to the remainder of his argument drawn from the divine perfection, we shall proceed to consider it in its second form. It is stated thus: "With regard to the existence of every event," (and of course sin,) "God must have been willing, or unwilling, or indifferent."

Here I think we shall all agree in two points; 1. That this is a fair and just proposition. 2. That God is not indifferent about the existence of events. The controversy then must turn on the other two points—is he willing, or unwilling? I understand Mr. H. to choose the former, viz. that God wills the existence of every event, and of course sin. I choose the latter, viz. that He is unwilling that sin should exist. Gen. ii. 17. Mr. H. says that the conclusion from the position which I take is, that God must have been deficient in power:



Now I grant that the conclusion is just, in the same sense in which it is impossible for God to lie; Heb. vi. 18. for, as has already been stated, when God had made known his determination to make man the subject of a *moral* government, and to treat him as such, it was as impossible as for him to change or lie, to arrest the course of man's *moral* conduct, so far as he was accountable for that conduct.

The conclusion from the theory of Mr. H. is, that God wills the existence of, and "produces" sin; and of course is pleased with its nature. The conclusion from the theory which we have chosen is, that having made known his determination, he is unchangeable, and cannot, consistent with eternal truth, alter the thing which is gone out of his mouth. Which side of this question is most consistent with reason and Revelation, the public must judge.

To conclude his first argument, Mr. H. asks; "Is it not plain, that, if we deny that the government of Jehovah, extends to every event, we sacrifice his character?" To which I answer; if by the government of God extending to every event, Mr. H. means no more than the overruling providence of God, then, by denying it, we do sacrifice his character. But if, as is feared, he means by it, that God is the author of sin, then, by denying that his government extends to every event, we defend that sacred character from one of the most pernicious errors that was ever propagated.

Whether Mr. H. has succeeded to "mathematical demonstration" in his first argument, shall now be left for the reader to judge, and we will pass to the second.

This argument is what may be called the *connexion* and *dependence* of events; it runs thus:—"There is a connexion existing between events, which renders it absurd to suppose that some are determined, and others not."

This argument also proceeds upon the supposition that

God cannot do a benevolent act, independent of sin, and sinners. That this conclusion is just, will appear from the following quotation: "Shall we then say, that God had determined that his Son should be put to death, and the time when it should be done, but had determined nothing about the means by which it was to be effected?" He goes on, "I trust that the bare statement of this question is sufficient to show, that if the death of Christ was determined, the determination could not have been accomplished, unless the other events with which it is connected, and which involve the moral conduct of men, had been also determined." page 66. It is no very difficult matter to discover that Mr. H. would be understood here, as in the former argument, that God has determined the existence of every sin, great and small, that ever was, or ever will be committed on earth. His own weapons however will turn against himself; for, in his former argument, he uses the *infinite wisdom* of God, as an argument for the introduction of sin. Now on his own principle of reasoning, if the great Jehovah "*could not*" have accomplished his benevolent purposes without the agency of sin, and sinners, was he not deficient in *wisdom*? If he *could* have done it without the agency of sin, but *would not*, was he not deficient in *goodness*? If he could have devised a way, but could not effect it, was he not deficient in *power*?

"I trust that the bare statement of this question is sufficient to show" the absurdity of my opponent's reasoning. But let us examine this argument a little further.—After mentioning the connexion and dependence of events, in relation to the birth and death of the Saviour, he observes:—"In order that Christ should be put to death, he must be betrayed; there must be such a character as Judas; he must be tempted with thirty pieces of silver."

Ah ! could not *infinite wisdom* think you, find out a way, to accomplish that glorious design, without the agency of that hell-deserving conduct of Judas ? Was Judas so main a spoke in that mighty wheel which rolled salvation to our world ? If through the fall of Judas, salvation is come to the world, what shall his reception be but life from the dead ? It was also said of Christ, that of the people there were *none* with him ; and that he trod the wine-press alone, but how can this be true, if he had so powerful an assistant as Judas ?

Again ; we are told that God cannot be tempted with evil, neither *tempteth he any man*. Let any man say, if he dare, that to be tempted, in this text, does not mean, to be seduced to the commission of crime. If so, to what a conclusion are we conducted ? Why, according to Mr. H. (page 74,) "The great Jehovah, by so disposing of motives in his providence," (say the thirty pieces of silver,) that Judas is *tempted* to the commission of one of the most heart-appalling crimes, that ever disgraced our fallen world !

We shall now endeavour to show that the all-wise and great Jehovah, was not dependent on sin, or sinners, for the accomplishment of his benevolent designs ; and that we are not indebted to Judas, the Jews, nor yet Pilate, for our salvation, but to the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ did not die by reason of the wounds he received. This is proved two ways, 1. from his own words. • "No man taketh my life from me, but I lay it down of myself: I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." John x. 18 ; "Who by the eternal spirit, *offered himself* without spot to God." Heb. ix. 14 ; "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death." Observe, this was before he was nailed to the cross. 2. This is proved by a view of several circumstances attending his death. 1, He died much sooner than was usual for persons crucified ;—he lived but three hours after being nailed to

the cross; while it is said that it was usual for persons crucified, to live from three to five days. 2, His strength remained firm to the last; so that he cried with a *loud voice* at the moment he gave up the ghost. How do these facts accord with the dogmatical assertions of Mr. H. when he says, "He *must* be betrayed; there *must* be such a character as Judas; he *must* be tempted," &c?

But it may be said that some other passages, speak a very different language.—"Him being delivered, by the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God, ye have taken, and with wicked hands have crucified and slain." Acts, ii. 23.—"Who was delivered for our offences?" Rom. iv. 25.—"The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men to be crucified." I answer: The two first of these texts prove, that God so loved the world, that, by his determinate counsel, and according to his fore-knowledge, he delivered his son, 1, into organick life, to fulfil all righteousness by a life of perfect obedience. 2. Into the hands of divine justice, to suffer death as a sacrifice for the redemption of the world.—The last of the above texts proves that Christ was perfidiously delivered into the hands of men, by one who said, "What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you."—If this sense of the text is doubted, the parallel place in Matthew will decide it. "Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover, and the son of man is *betrayed to be crucified.*" Math. xxvi. 2.—Now that God delivered his son in the former sense, is a great truth; but it remains for our opponents to prove, that, by so disposing of motives in his providence, he led Judas to betray his Master. I think we had better keep to the scripture account of the "disposer of motives" in this case. That informs us, that "after the sup, SATAN entered into Judas;" and another passage declares that, the devil put it into the heart of Judas to betray him.

Here the scriptures abundantly testify that the devil was the disposer of motives in the case of Judas ; Mr. H. however, thinks it "absurd to suppose that some events are determined" (by the Lord,) "and others not ;" of course he would have us understand that God was the great first cause of the temptation, sin, and ruin of Judas ; the devil being only a tool in the hand of the Lord, by which he accomplished his eternal purposes ! Now can we hesitate one moment, whether to believe the assertions of Mr. H. or the scripture account ? I think not. But it may be asked how this view of the subject, can be reconciled with that passage which says, that the Jews had been the betrayers, and murderers of the Lord Jesus ? I answer ; 1, We all agree that Judas betrayed him. 2. Hatred is the essence of murder. "He that hateth his brother is a murderer." I. John, iii. 15 : and the Jews manifested their disposition as far as they could by their works. To illustrate this by a common similitude ; suppose a man from malice afore-thought, way lays his neighbour by night, for the purpose of murdering him ; at length, as he supposes, he hears his foot-steps—he fires upon him—but behold he kills a deer ! Is he not a murderer ? So in the case of the Jews : they had the disposition—they used their exertions—and yet he died independent of them. There is another text which is often brought to support the system we oppose, "Thou couldst have no power against me, except it were *given thee from above.*" John, xix. 11. That this text makes nothing for that system, will appear when we reflect, that the power in question, and which is said to be given from above, was the power of *civil authority*. 1. That the Jews had not the power of life and death, while subject to the Romans, is a notorious fact ; and one, which they themselves acknowledged, by saying, "*It is not lawful for us to put any man to death.*" 2. This is also evident from the

question of Pilate;—"Knowest thou not that I have *power* to release thee, and have *power* to crucify thee?" 3, This will appear still more evident, from a consideration of what our Lord added—"Therefore, he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin." I can see no reason for what our Lord added, on the Calvinistic scheme; for wherein was the sin of Judas the greater, on the supposition that the authority which Pilate had received from above, was a power perfidiously to take away the life of the Saviour without cause? But on the other ground, it is plain and easy.—  
 1. Judas knew that Pilate possessed that civil authority by which he *could* take away life. 2. He must have known something of the disposition of Pilate. 3. And therefore, he knew at least, that there was a danger, that he would yield to the blood-thirsty and clamorous Jews; and *therefore, was his sin the greater.*

But will Mr. H. say, that God the Father, chose to have his Son murdered, and for this purpose so disposed of motives in his providence, as to lead Judas to deliver up his Master? If so, who hath the greater sin!! This is an awful consequence I grant, but it lies at the door of the Calvinistic system.

The sum is, civil authority is ordained of God; but the same God who gave it requires that it be exercised in justice and judgment; and that he who possesses it, shall by no means condemn the innocent, and clear the guilty. Will our opponents then say, that God, by a disposition of motives in his providence, led Pilate to yield to the wishes of the people, and condemn the innocent Saviour, and clear the guilty Barrabbas? If they do, it is hoped they will no more charge those who oppose such a system, with want of "propriety," and "candour." Why should Mr. H. feel so disagreeable on account of what he calls "violent hostilities,"

and "unreasonable prejudices?" According to him, the Lord, by a disposition of motives before the mind, leads people to these hostilities and prejudices! Yes, and he may find more comfort still, for all these events are for the greatest possible good of the universe! And indeed I find some comfort myself; for if the doctrine which I oppose is true, yet I could not so well secure God's glory, or do so great good to the universe in any other way as by opposing it!! "O heart cheering doctrine,—*"Whatever is, is right!"*

We conclude upon the whole, that the "connexion of events," forms no argument to prove that God is the author of sin, or, that he has determined its existence. Again he observes:—"It is acknowledged also by all who believe the Bible, that in every event which is conducive to the prosperity of truth, and righteousness in the world, God has an agency." If Mr. H. means by this, that God exerts an agency in "*producing*" those sins, which have been overruled for his glory, and the good of the world, we deny it, and yet believe the Bible and call for proof. But if he means that God exerts an agency so far as is consistent with man's accountability, we have no controversy with him on this point.

The conclusion therefore, which Mr. H. draws, that "the kingdom of God is promoted without his assistance," has no weight, unless *sin as such*, promotes the kingdom of God; and if so, it is to be hoped that he will no more preach against it. And why should he? If God is infinite in *wisdom*, (according to Mr. H.) he certainly must know how much sin it is best on the whole should exist; and if he be infinite in *power*, he certainly can, and will produce just so much sin, and prevent the existence of all the rest. "But are not" (says he,) "events so connected, and interwoven, as to render it impossible that all such events should be deter-

mined and no others?" O no; unless the great Jehovah is "deficient in wisdom" and "power;" and I will add goodness too! I conclude therefore, that God could very consistently overrule the conduct of Joseph's brethren, and that of the "Jews in the death of Christ" to the promotion of good, without exerting an agency in *producing* the hatred of the one, or the malice of the other. But he proceeds—"Now, all the agency which God exerted in controlling these events, it must be acknowledged, if he be immutable, he had *always determined* to exert." p. 67. True; but all the agency which God exerts in *controlling* events, does not amount to the production of one sin. God always determined to control events, because he always knew that events would exist; but never determined to produce sin, which is contrary both to his nature and commands.

Again he says—"Did he determine to control events, in the existence of which, he had neither choice nor influence?" No; for he *chose* that sin should not exist; and therefore, interposed the *influence* of a most solemn command against it: Gen. ii. 17. He had therefore, both choice and influence, in the existence of the events which he determined to control. But this choice, and this influence were both against the very existence of some of the events which he determined to control, as every command, and every threatening in the Bible, abundantly shows. To assert that God has determined the existence of sin, and then forbade the commission of it, and threatened the transgressor with eternal ruin, is to charge him with the highest duplicity. He goes on—"If so, there are many events independent of God." I answer: sinners are not independent of God, yet he has nothing to do with *producing* their sins. Their existence and support, is for a far more noble purpose than to sin against God; and herein sinners do not answer the end of their creation. But



on the Calvinistic scheme, they as much answer the end of their creation, when committing *murder* and *adultery*, as when *praying* and *repenting* ; for, say they, all these things "are in the plan of God."

But agin—"And if this be asserted, we are deprived of all proof of his existence." All proof! O no; unless *sin* is the only proof we have of the existence of a God! and surely no man in his senses will assert that. We might well argue the existence of the devil, from the existence of sin; but we could hardly argue his existence from the prevalence of holiness and happiness in the world. So of the existence of God.—We cannot argue the existence of an infinitely holy and, wise Being, from the existence of sin and misery; but we can argue his existence indubitably, from the works of his hands, which are verity and truth, and from his disposition manifested against sin, and in the redemption and salvation of a ruined world. He proceeds—"It can be no more difficult to account for the existence of *all* events without a God, than for the existence of a part." O yes; for *sin* is of the devil; "For the devil sinneth from the beginning;" I. John, iii, 8. We will then account for all those events which are properly denominated *moral evils*, by means of the devil, and wicked men; and for the existence of all the rest, by means of the infinite wisdom, and almighty power of the great Jehovah. But who made the devil and wicked men? I answer; the Lord made holy angels, and man in a state of perfection and happiness: but both have fallen—the one irrecoverably, the other wretchedly. God, however, is not the author of the changes which have taken place in the moral condition of either. Neither can it be proved, that he ever designed or decreed those changes, by which the one became a devil, and the other a sinner.

But once more—"But if it be acknowledged that he has some kind of agency in the existence of every event, it must also be acknowledged that he has determined the whole of his own actions." Yes, he has doubtless determined the whole of *his own actions*; and as far as we are able to discover those actions, by a survey of the works of creation, providence, and grace, we can see nothing like moral evil coming from his hand. "Determined the whole of his own actions!" Surely had not the dictates of ecclesiastical policy clipped the wings of this conclusion, we might have seen Calvinism without a covering; for that system not only teaches that he has determined the whole of *his own actions*, but also, the actions, good and bad, of every other being in the universe!

But Mr. H. attempts to establish his decrees from the scriptures. This comprises his third argument; but how far he has succeeded, we are now to see.

The first of the three passages produced in confirmation of this doctrine, is, Eph. i. 11. "Who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." This text proves that God exerts an agency in overruling and governing all events, even sin, so far as is consistent with his own character, and the relation of man, as an accountable being. Yes, all that *God works*, he works after the counsel of his own will; but how this proves that he works *sin* into existence, is difficult to see. We know that the counsel of his own will, worketh many very solemn commands against it, but not a word in favour of it. If I understand Mr. H. his object is to impress the idea that God is the author of every event. Hence, for instance, when a man murders, it is his only as an instrument; God is the proper author of the act. But if this is too horrible, and approaches too near to blasphemy, let our opponents cease to put a forced construction upon this text, in order to support a favourite scheme.

The following is believed to be at once, a more consistent and harmonious view of this passage :

1. As *will* is the determination of the mind, it seems to be the result of understanding and judgment; and these in God, being absolutely holy, and infinitely perfect, the will of God therefore, must partake of the same divine perfection. It cannot therefore will any thing unholy, or imperfect.

2. If the text has any regard to the natural or material world, the term "*worketh*" has reference, 1st. to the creation of all things; 2d. to the government of matter by the irresistible laws of nature.

If it has reference to the moral world, it is to be understood, 1st. of the creation of moral agents; 2d. to the government of them by laws suited to their capacity, and to the character of the law-giver.

It also, without doubt, has regard to that mighty scheme of redemption and salvation, by which Jesus Christ became "the propitiation for our sins, and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world;" and to the great doctrines, experience, and duties of the Christian religion, as laid down in the Holy Scriptures. But what has all this to do with Calvinistic decrees? The counsel of his own will, has made man an accountable being, and appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by Jesus Christ; but has not, as we think, unalterably decreed, that men *shall* act as they do in a thousand instances.

The second passage produced, is, Prov. xvi. 4. "The Lord hath made all things for himself." This text proves that all the Lord hath made, he made for himself. But will Mr. H. say that the Lord made sin for himself? We read that sin is the transgression of a law; how, think you, did the Lord go to work to make sin? Whose law did he transgress? Again, from Exodus, xx. 11, we learn that the work

of creation was *finished* in six days; and in looking over the first week's work, sin is not to be found in the whole catalogue.

The third and last of his scripture proofs, is, Isaiah, xlv. 7, 10. "I am God, and there is none like me; declaring the end from the beginning; and from ancient times the things that are not yet done; saying my counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." This text proves, 1. that Jehovah is God; 2. that there is none like him; 3, that he foreknows all things; and has declared some things by prophecy. 4. That he will do just as pleases him best; or, in other words, he has determined the whole of his own actions.

"Again" he says, "the scriptures so explicitly assert that such events as death and the day of Judgment, are determined of God, that no believer in the Bible will dispute it." True; and this was done because he saw there would be occasion for it, and not because he had *given* occasion for it. But he goes on—"But these" (*i. e.* death and the day of judgment) "depend on innumerable other events, which of course are in the plan of God; which at the same time are of a moral nature." The reader will not mistake the meaning of Mr. H. here, for the "innumerable other events," to which he alludes, are of a *moral* nature, and of course involve the moral conduct of men. These he tells us are in the plan of God. Now who does not see, that he means here in a sly manner, to insinuate that God is the author of all sin; for this is what made death and judgment necessary. All I have further to say of this wild notion, is, that I sincerely wish such bold assertions, might either be proved, or discarded by rational men.

Now for the sweeping conclusion. "The unavoidable result of this reasoning is, that if some events are determined of God, the whole are, and every prophecy in the Bible is

of course a proof of the point in debate." Now let us try a case of this mighty reasoning! God foresaw that Judas would betray his Master; he painted it on the mind of the prophet by the pencil of inspiration; the prophet declared it long before it took place; therefore the sin of Judas was determined of God! I think it remains a doubt whether the *unavoidable* result of this reasoning is, that all events, sin not excepted, are determined of God. But finally, says he, "If argument will convince, it is believed that enough has been exhibited to satisfy every honest and inquiring mind."

On the one hand it is not very pleasant to be considered *dishonest*, or wanting in *inquiry* after truth; yet on the other, I cannot see that *enough* has been exhibited to establish a point of such moment, both to the character of God, and the happiness of mankind. However, it is only the opinion of Mr. H. of his own arguments;—every man must think for himself. I find no fault with the quantity of argument, but with its want of *strength*.

We now pass to the consideration of the third question on the "government of God." It runs thus—"Does not this doctrine destroy the free-agency of men?"

By "*this doctrine*," I understand the doctrine of absolute predestination; or, that God has unalterably fixed every event, (and of course sin,) just as it takes place: and of course that *no event* can take place in the least different from what it does. After having laboured to prove this doctrine, by the arguments which we have already considered, he next attempts to show by three arguments, that man is a *free-agent notwithstanding!* Reader, what should you think, to hear a man gravely propose to the world, to show by three arguments, that the two opposite points of a compass, both point to the north at the same time? Such

however, in our view, is the attempt of Mr. H. in the case of theology now before us. We shall however approach this mighty fabric, and examine the materials of its foundation and superstructure. Here then are two distinct doctrines; the one, the doctrine of *necessity*, the other, the doctrine of *free-agency*.—The former goes to say, 1, that God saw it to be “best on the whole,” that sin, and every other event that does, should exist. 2. That he decreed or “determined to *produce* every such event.” 3. That these events are so fixed and certain, being “in the plan of God,” that they cannot one fail to take place when, and under precisely such circumstances, as it is pretended was decreed. 4. These decrees “involve the moral conduct of men.” The latter sentiment goes to say, 1st, that God saw fit to create man an accountable being. 2d. In order to render it just for him to treat him as such, endowed him with freedom of will; i. e. a power to choose or refuse the various objects presented to his mind; and of course, events which involve his moral conduct, may, or may not take place, according to the determinations of his mind. I trust that the bare statement of these doctrines, is sufficient to show, that, as soon might the *iron* and *clay* in Nebuchadnezzar’s great image unite, as for these doctrines to be both true at the same time.

One of the principal errors, into which Mr. H. seems to have fallen, in the discussion of this point, is, the confounding *certainty* with *necessity*. He uses these terms as synonymous; and it appears, would convey the idea that there is no difference in their signification. That this however is a mistake, will appear on a moment’s reflection.

“It is certain that I write at this moment, but am I *necessitated* to it? May I not drop my pen, and meditate, read, or walk? The chasm, which in many cases, separates

*absolute certainty* from *absolute necessity*, is as immense as that, which stands between a *point* and *infinity*. Take notice of the insect that buzzes about your ears : does it not exist as *certainly* as God himself? but would it not be a kind of blasphemy to say that it exists as *necessarily*? Would it not at least, be paying to a fly, an honour which is due to none but God, the only Supreme, and *absolute necessary* Being? And when you support your doctrines by confounding *certainty* with *necessity*, do you not support them by confounding two things, which, in a thousand cases, and especially in the present one, have no more connexion than the two poles?"\*

While we are on this subject, permit me to make a further quotation from the same excellent author.—“I remind the reader,” (says he,) “that Mr. Edwards, President of New-Jersey College, is exactly of Zelotes’† sentiment with respect to *necessity* or *bound-will*. They agree to maintain, that *necessary* circumstances *necessarily* turn the scale of our judgment, that our judgment *necessarily* turns the scale of our will, and that the freedom of our will consists merely in choosing with *willingness*, what we must choose by *necessity*. Mr. Voltaire, also, at the head of the fatalists abroad, and one of my opponents at the head of the Calvinists in England, gives us, after Mr. Edwards, this false idea of liberty. To show their mistake, I need only to produce the words of Mr. Locke.—“Liberty cannot be where there is no *thought*, no *volition*, no *will*, &c. So a man striking himself or his friend, by a convulsive motion of his arm, which is not in his power by volition, or the direction of his mind, to stop or forbear; nobody thinks he has liberty in this; every one

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\* Fletcher's Works, vol. 5, page 81.

† A rigid Calvinist.

pities him, as acting by *necessity* and *constraint*. Again, there may be thought, there may be *will*, there may be *volition*, where there is *no liberty*. Suppose a man be carried, whilst fast asleep, into a room, where is a person he longs to see, and be there locked fast in, beyond his power to get out; he awakes, and is glad to see himself in so desirable company, which he stays *willingly* in; that is, he prefers staying to going away. Is not this stay *voluntary*? I think nobody will doubt it, and yet being locked fast in, he is *not at liberty* to stay, he has *not freedom* to be gone. So that *liberty* is not an idea belonging to *volition*, or *preferring*; but to the person having the *power* of doing, or forbearing to do, according as the mind shall choose or direct."

Again, Mr. Fletcher observes further, in relation to *liberty* or *free-agency*—"Our liberty consists, (1,) in our being under *no natural necessity*, with regard to the choice of the means, by which we pursue happiness; and, of consequence, with regard to our schemes and actions. I repeat it, by *natural necessity* I mean, an absolute want of power to do the reverse of what is done. Thus, by *natural necessity* an ounce is outweighed by a pound; it can no ways help it; and a man whose eyes are quite put out, *cannot absolutely* see the light, should he desire and endeavour it ever so much. Hence it appears, that, when Peter denied his Master, he was not under the *natural necessity* so to do: for he might have confessed him if he had pleased: and when David went to Uriah's bed he might have gone to his own. There was no shadow of *natural necessity* in these cases. We *may* then, or we *may not* admit the *truth* or the *lie*, that is laid before us as a principle of action. Thus the Eunuch *without necessity* admitted the truth delivered to him by Philip; and Eve *without necessity* entertained the lie, which was told her by the serpent.



(2.) Our liberty consists in a power carefully to consider whether what is presented to us as a principle of action, is a *truth* or a *lie*; lest we should judge according to *deceitful appearances*. Our blessed Lord, by steadily using this power, steadily baffled the tempter; and Adam by not making a proper use of it, was shamefully overcome.

(3.) It consists in a power natural to all moral agents, to do acts of sin if they please, and in a supernatural or gracious power, bestowed for Christ's sake upon fallen man, to forbear with some degree of ease, doing sinful acts, at least when we have not fully thrown ourselves down the declivity of temptation and passion; and when we have not yet, by that means, contracted such strong habits, as make virtue or vice *morally necessary* to us.

(4.) It consists in a gracious power to make diligent enquiry, and to apply in doubtful cases to the *Father of lights* for wisdom, before we *practically* decide, that such a doctrine is true, or such an action is right. Had Eve, and David, used that power, the one would not have been deceived by a flattering serpent; nor the other by an impure desire.

(5.) But the highest degree of our liberty consists in a power to suspend a course of life entered upon; to re-examine our principle, and to admit a new one, if it appear more suitable; especially when we are particularly assisted by divine grace, or strongly wrought upon by temptations, adapted to our weakness. Thus by their gracious free-agency, Manasses and the prodigal son suspended their *bad* course of life, weighed the case a second time *for the better*, admitted the truth which they once rejected, and from that new principle wrought righteousness: while, on the other hand, Solomon, Judas, and Demas, by their *natural* free-agency, suspended their *good* course of life, weighed the

case a second time *for the worse*, admitted the *lie* which they once detested, and from that new principle wrought damnable iniquity. Is not this account of our *real*, though *limited liberty*, more agreeable to scripture, reason, conscience and experience, than the *necessity* maintained by Calvinistic bound-willers and Deistical fatalists ?”

He continues:—“I have already observed, that the seemingly contrary systems of those gentlemen, (Voltaire and Edwards) like the two opposite half-diameters of a circle, meet in *natural necessity*, a central point which is common to both; Mr. Voltaire, who is the apostle of the Deistical world, and Mr. Edwards, who is the oracle of Calvinistic metaphysicians, exactly agreeing to represent man as a *mere*, though *willing* slave, to the circumstances in which he finds himself, and to load him from head to foot, and from the cradle to the grave, with the chains of absolute *necessity*, one link of which he can no more break than he can make a world. Their error, if I mistake not, springs chiefly from their over-looking the important difference there is between *natural necessity*, and what the barrenness of language obliges me to call *moral necessity*. Hence it is, that they perpetually confound *real liberty*, which is always of an *active* nature, with that kind of necessity in disguise, which I beg leave to call *passive liberty*. Clear definitions, illustrated by plain examples, will make this intelligible; will unravel the mystery of fatalism, and rescue the capital doctrine of *liberty* from its confinement in mystical Babel.

(1.) A thing is done by *natural necessity*, when it *unavoidably* takes place, according to the fixed laws of *nature*. Thus by *natural necessity*, a serpent begets a serpent, and not a dove; a fallen man begets a fallen child, and not an angel; a deaf man cannot hear, and a cripple cannot be a swift runner.

(2.) A thing is done by *moral necessity* (if I may use that improper expression) when it is done by a free agent with a peculiar degree of readiness, resolution and determination; from strong motives, powerful arguments, confirmed habits: and when it might nevertheless be done just the reverse, if the free agent pleased. Thus, by a low degree of *moral necessity*, chaste, conscientious Joseph, struggled out of the arms of his master's wife, and cried out, 'How CAN I do this great wickedness and sin against God?'—And by a high degree of it Satan hates holiness, God abhors sin, and Christ refused to fall down and worship the devil.

(3.) I have observed in the second check, that Mr. Edwards' celebrated treatise upon free-will, turns in a great degree upon a comparison between *balances* and the *will*. To show more clearly the flaw of his performance, I beg leave to venture upon the *improper*, and in one sense, *contradictory*, expression of *passive liberty*. By *passive liberty*, (which might also be called *mechanical liberty*) I mean the readiness with which just scales turn upon the least weight being thrown into either of them. Now it is certain that *this liberty* (so called) is *mere necessity*: for two even scales *necessarily* balance each other, and the heavier scale *necessarily* outweighs the lighter. According to the fixed laws of nature, it cannot be otherwise. It is evident therefore, that when Mr. Edwards avails himself of such popular, improper expressions as these, 'Good scales are *free* to turn either way—just balances are at *liberty* to rise or fall by the least weight,' he absurdly imposes upon the *moral* world a *mechanical freedom*, or *liberty*, which is *mere necessity*. His mistake is set in a still clearer light by the following definition.

(4.) *Active liberty* is that of living creatures, endowed with a *degree of power to use their powers in various man-*

ners ; their prerogative is to have in general the weight that turns them in a great degree *at their own disposal*. Experience confirms this observation ; how many stubborn beasts, for example, have died under the repeated strokes of their drivers, rather than move at their command ! And how many thousand Jews chose to be destroyed, rather than to be saved by Him who said, ‘ How often would I have gathered you, &c. and YE WOULD NOT.’ Hence it appears, that *active liberty* subdivides itself into *brutal liberty*, and *rational or moral liberty*.

(5.) *Brutal liberty* belongs to beasts, and a *rational or moral liberty*, belongs to men, angels and God. By *brutal liberty*, understand the power that beasts have to use their animal powers various ways, according to their instinct, and at their pleasure. By *rational liberty*, understand the power that God, angels and men, have to use their *divine, angelic, or human* powers in various manners, according to their wisdom, and at their pleasure. Thus, while an *oak* is tied fast by the root, to the spot where it seeds and grows, a *horse* carries his own root along with him ; ranging without necessity, and feeding as he pleases all over his pasture.— While a horse is thus employed, a man may either make a saddle for his back, a spur for his side, a collar for his shoulder, a stable for his conveniency, or a carriage for him to draw ;—or, leaving these mechanical businesses to others, he may think of the scourge that tore his Saviour’s back, call to mind the spear that pierced his side, reflect upon the cross that galled his shoulder, the stable where he was born, and the bright carriage in which he went to heaven ; or he may by degrees, so inure himself to infidelity, as to call the gospel a fable, and Christ an impostor.

According to these definitions it appears, that our sphere of *liberty* increases with our powers. The more powers an-

imals have, and the more ways they can use those powers, the more *brutal* liberty they have also : thus, those creatures that can, when they please, walk upon the earth, fly through the air, or swim in the waters, as some sorts of fowls, have a more extensive liberty than a worm, which has the freedom of one of those elements only, and that too in a very imperfect degree.

As by the help of a good horse a rider increases his power to move swiftly, and to go far ; so by the help of science and application, a philosopher can penetrate into the secrets of nature, and an Archytas or a Newton can

‘Soar to the stars ; and, with his mind, travel round the universe.’

Such geniuses have undoubtedly more liberty of *thought*, than those sots whose minds are fettered with ignorance and excess, and whose imagination can just make shift to flutter from the tavern to the play-house and back again. By a parity of reason, they who enjoy ‘the glorious liberty of the children of God,’ who can in a moment recollect their thoughts, fix them upon the noblest objects, and raise them not only to the stars, like Archytas, but to the throne of God, like St. Paul ;—they who can ‘become all things to all men.’ *be content* in every station, and even sing *at midnight* in the dungeon, regardless of their empty stomachs, their scourged backs, and their ‘feet made fast in the stocks ;’ they who can command their passions and their appetites, *are free from sin*, and find ‘God’s service perfect freedom ;’ these happy people, I say, enjoy far more liberty of *heart* than the brutish men, who are so enslaved to their appetites and passions, that they have just liberty enough left them, not to ravish the women they set their eyes upon, and to murder the men they are angry with. But although the liberty of God’s children is so *glorious* now, it will be far more so, when their regenerate souls shall be matched in the great day with bodies

blooming as youth, beautiful as angels, radiant as the sun, powerful as lightning, immortal as God, and capable of keeping pace with the Lamb, when he shall lead them to new fountains of bliss, and run with them the endless round of celestial delights."

If any apology is necessary for these lengthy quotations from the very pious and learned author above referred to, it is this:—1. A desire to show in what light some of the most able divines of the church of England viewed Mr. Edwards' celebrated performance on the will. 2. A desire to set the subject of *free agency* in a clearer light than I was able to do. As we have shown from this author that there is a wide difference between *certainty* and *necessity*, and as Mr. H. uses these terms as synonymous, I shall take the liberty to use the word *necessity* in general, as best conveying what I understand him to mean by both. Should I use the term *absolute certainty*, I mean by it the same as *necessity*. Here, then, we have one concession from Mr. H. which ought here to be noticed, viz: That the "*knowledge of God, has no possible influence on the actions of men, and of course their agency cannot be affected by it.*"—p. 68. This concession the reader will keep in mind, that, whatever *necessity* our opponents consider to be attached to the *moral conduct* of men, it is none the more *necessary* or *absolutely* certain for being fore known. He enquires—

"In what way is it pretended that this doctrine (the absolute fore-ordination of 'whatever comes to pass') destroys the agency of man? It is presumed that those who urge this objection, have no notion nor idea, that it is done in any other way, than by rendering our actions *certain*."

We will first attend to our author's question, and then to what he *presumes*. 1. It is pretended that the doctrine of *absolute necessity*, by which, Calvinism tells us, that every

event, even the *moral* conduct of men, is brought to pass, does destroy the free agency of man, by rendering him a *necessary* instead of a *moral* agent; in whose actions there can be no more *moral* liberty, than in the wheel which turns by force of water. 2. He presumes that we can have no notion that his doctrine of fatality destroys the agency of man in any other way, than by rendering *his* actions *certain*. As our opponent *appears* not to know the ground we take, and that *we* see a wide difference between a thing being *certain* and it being *necessary*, we will here state, that it is not the certainty of an event, which we think destroys the moral liberty of man, but the event being rendered *necessary* by an *unalterable* decree. Did such a decree exist in relation to the *moral* conduct of men, any where but in the creed of our opponents, we say that decree would destroy the freedom of our actions as moral agents: nor have they, as yet, proved to the contrary. But did not Mr. H. know that we understand a difference between certainty and necessity? and if so, why did he presume that to be our ground which he knew was not? It is true it might be more easy, to answer the objection in that form than in any other, yet answering it in *that* form did not answer the objection: it still lays with all its strength against the Calvinistic scheme. Again he observes:

“It seems indeed to be taken for granted, that certainty cannot be consistent with freedom.”

It is indeed taken for granted, that *such* a certainty as is the result of *absolute necessity*, cannot be consistent with freedom; and as our opponents have assumed the affirmative of the question, we shall wait to see it proved. Many have tried to reconcile these contradictory sentiments, and said many plausible things, but a large majority of the christian world, and even many who profess to be Calvinists, explode

this absurdity as having no foundation in scripture, reason, or common sense. Again he says—"We would then ask, whether it is possible to conceive, that God is able to create a being, if it were his intention, who should be dependent on him for existence and support, whose actions at the same time might be free?" I answer, we do conceive it to be possible and easy, for God to create a free agent, while it was his intention so to do; because his intention being immutable, rendered it both *certain* and *necessary*; but how does this prove, that if the *moral* conduct of this being were as *absolutely certain* and *necessary* as his existence, he could be a free agent at all? Only prove that it was God's intention that men should act as they do in every instance, and that he created them for this very purpose, and supplies them with opportunity, motives, &c. and moves them on to this very end, prove this, I say and the controversey will be at an end. Then we shall all agree that man is a *necessary* agent, and cannot do different from what he does in a single instance; and therefore that he is no more accountable for his conduct than an ounce is, for being out-weighed by a pound: and no more sense in a day of judgment, than there would be in arraigning a watch and rewarding it for keeping good time, or in dashing it in pieces for not keeping good time. "And if (says he) created and dependent beings cannot be free, the dispute is at an end; for men were created, and if mankind are not free, their agency cannot be destroyed by the decree of God."

I thank Mr. H. for his assistance in establishing that great truth, that men are free, and yet dependent on the Creator for existence and support. And we agree with him further, that if men are not free, their freedom cannot be destroyed even by God himself! But the question is not whether men are free, or whether God can create a free agent; but whether



er, if Calvinistic fatality be true, there is any such thing as free agency. Settle this point, and the dispute *will* be at an end. Again, after stating that God is able to create a being whose actions may be perfectly voluntary, he observes—

“Now, suppose that God should possess such a knowledge of causes and of their operations, as to *know infallibly*, how this being would act in every circumstance in which he should be placed. Is the agency of this being injured by this knowledge?” No, sir; for God *knows*, with the same *infallibility*, that men may do different from what they do.—But the question is not whether the *knowledge* of God, destroys the agency of men. We all agree with Mr. H. in his next words, that the “*knowledge* of God, has no possible influence on the actions of men.” No—

“He acts within himself alone,

“As if his actions had been unforeknown.”

Who that reads the above remarks of Mr. H. but must see, that while he acknowledges, that the *knowledge* of God has no possible influence on the actions of men, he grounds his whole argument for the *absolute certainty* of events upon it? The question however at issue, is, whether an unalterable decree, by which our opponents contend, that every event is rendered absolutely certain, does not destroy the agency of men. To the discussion of *this* question, our author comes with reluctance. It would seem that he infers, that God has decreed the existence of every event, from his foreknowledge of every event. If this were a just inference, it would follow that foreknowledge and decree, are one and the same, which is absurd: for one is an attribute of the divine Being, and the other is the determination or resolution of his mind.—Now it is evident that Mr. H. considers them as one and the same; and therefore when he says, that the knowledge of God has no possible influence, &c. he would doubtless be

understood to say, that the unalterable decree of God, by which every event is rendered *absolutely certain* and necessary, does not destroy the agency of men. For the proof of this notion, we have the assertions of our opponents, and but little else. But let us attend to the conclusion of his argument:—"Since nothing can be more certain than the knowledge of God, it follows that *certainty may be consistent with free agency.*"

Here it is manifest he again grounds his whole argument on the knowledge of God; but admitting, for argument's sake, that this knowledge amounts to the nature of a decree, yet it is difficult to see wherein Mr. H. has made it appear, that, that certainty which, it is pretended, is the result of a divine decree, "may be consistent with freedom." Suppose he had proved, that God has unalterably decreed the moral conduct of men, yet he has not, in our view, proved that men at the same time can act the part of accountable agents: this is a task yet to be performed. God undoubtedly knows how every free agent will act, but to say that this knowledge *renders* those actions certain, is to say, that men cannot act different from what they do; which is contradicted by the whole tenour of God's word; and by the experience of every individual. But the reader must see the glaring absurdity of the reasoning of Mr. H. for he first states, that the knowledge of God has *no possible* influence on the actions of men; and now in the conclusion, sets it forth armed with all the fatality of an irrevocable decree! If then it has any influence in rendering the actions of men *certain*, in just the same proportion, it has influence in destroying their agency. But *certainty* and *freedom* are not the points to be reconciled by our opponents, unless the term *certain* be understood to be the same as decree; for events may be rendered *certain*

by the actions of free agents, and these events be perfectly known to God, while at the same time the agents being free, might have acted otherwise. But says an objector—In that case, the Lord would have been disappointed. By no means; for had the agent acted otherwise, the knowledge of God being perfect, would have been otherwise also. The ground of the objector's mistake, is, the supposing God's knowledge to be imperfect, which is absurd.

We shall now examine his second argument, by which he attempts to show that certainty not only *may*, but *must*, be consistent with free-agency.

"Again, if we look at the operations of the mind in choosing, we shall see the very causes which renders our actions certain, render them free."

I think all will agree, that man was constituted a free agent at his creation; and that, when he by sin had lost that freedom, it was restored to him again by virtue of the atonement made by Christ. *Goodness*, then, is the cause which renders our actions *free*. Now the question is, whether the same cause renders our actions *certain*. Here again our opponent fails for want of proof; but if we are to believe him, p. 67, God has determined or decreed *every event*; and p. 73 and 74 we are told, that "the Great Jehovah, by the disposition of motives before the sinner, leads him to different acts of sin than he would otherwise have committed." These then appear to be the causes, according to Calvinism, which render our actions certain. Now, did *these causes* anywhere exist, but in the theory of our opponents, and did they at the same time render our actions certain, would they, nay, could they, at the same time, render them free? This would involve a contradiction, and of course is absurd. But let us hear him further.—

"In every instance of choice, in preferring that object which the mind judges to be most valuable, consists the

freedom of our actions." "But if the mind be influenced invariably by the strongest motive, then it is certain in the nature of things, previous to every choice, how it will terminate."—p. 69.

Specious as this argument appears at first view, a little attention will convince the unprejudiced mind, that it is very defective.

First, his account of our *freedom* is but a poor and partial account of that noble power with which man is endowed.—To be convinced of this, we only need to review the above account quoted from Mr. Fletcher. There man is endowed with *moral* liberty; but the liberty of which Mr. H. speaks, is the choosing with *willingness*, what we must choose of *necessity*: which is the same freedom with which water obeys the irresistible laws of gravitation. This will appear plain, if we but once put his doctrines together. 1. The mind is governed *invariably* by the strongest motive. 2. The great Jehovah disposes every motive before the mind just as it appears, and by that means carries the choice in every instance precisely as a weight turns a scale which way soever it is thrown in. What wonder that in view of this doctrine, the heathen poet should cry out—

"O, ye mortals! dismiss your cares, and unbend your minds. *Predestination* rules the world: all things happen according to a fixed decree." MANILIUS.

The second error in the argument of Mr. H. is, the supposition that the mind is invariably governed by the strongest motive; whereas from the above view of free-agency, it appears evident, that we not only have power to choose one out of various objects presented, but also to suspend a choice of either, for further consideration: and experience teaches the same thing. The great and glorious objects presented to the human mind in the gospel of Jesus Christ, are conser-

sedly of the greatest value; and there are thousands of sinners in Christendom, who judge religion to be of all things the most valuable, who after all prefer a course of sin. A criminal walks up a gallows-ladder, but he by no means prefers that course. Every sinner is a living witness to the truth of these observations; whose judgment, under the all commanding motives of the gospel, constantly teaches him the good and the right way, and he acknowledges it to be so, and yet the wrong pursues. He does violence to his better judgment, not however because he judges a course of sin to be most valuable, but because of the corruptions of his heart. But suppose for a moment, that in every instance of choice, the mind did prefer that object which it judged most valuable, yet many of these objects are only delusions, and are not in reality the most valuable. And yet Mr. H. tells us that "the mind is influenced *invariably* by the strongest motive," and that the great Jehovah is the disposer of these motives before the sinner! Now what is the conclusion? Why, that when the sinner prefers to sin, because he "judges that to be the most valuable," it is the great Jehovah who has deceived him by false and bad motives set before him! This is not all; for if the mind is invariably governed by the strongest motive, and God as invariably places these motives before the mind, what freedom has man in choosing? Why, as before observed, he has the same freedom with which the water by the irresistible laws of gravitation, runs down the unobstructed channel, and no more! Thus we see, that the system of our opponents, in a very few words, represents the Allwise and infinitely good God, as a deceiver of mankind, and a destroyer of their agency! The character of the devil himself could scarcely be represented in a worse light.

But he says, "If the mind be influenced *invariably* by the strongest motive, then it is certain in the nature of things,

previous to every choice, how it will terminate." O, yes ; if Calvinism be true, it is certain in the nature of *fate* : but that is the question. Only prove this, and the dispute is at an end. Again says he—

"So long as it is wholly uncertain with the mind in any given case how it will decide, though the mind may be said in that case to be free to choose, it is certainly not free *in choosing*."

Here Mr. H. after Mr. Edwards, represents the mind in a similar situation as a pair of scales, which are free *to turn*, but not free *in the act of turning* under the weight thrown into one side. *Mechanical* freedom then, is all the free agency allowed to *moral* agents by the Calvinists ! But I am sorry for one, that Mr. H. had not split this hair while he was upon this subject, and told us what the difference is between being free to *choose* and free *in choosing*. To *choose*, is generally defined to be the decision of the mind in favour of one among two or more objects ; and of course includes the whole process of choosing. But he acknowledges, that while it is wholly uncertain with the mind how it will decide, it is in that case free to choose.. I answer :—As it is only rendered certain by the choice of itself, and not by influencing motives which the mind cannot resist, if it be not free *in choosing*, it is not free at all ; for freedom of choice, supposes freedom *in the act of choosing*, as well as freedom *to the act*, if there is any difference. But what has this to do with Calvinistic certainty, which supposes every choice to be governed by irresistible motives placed before the mind by the great Jehovah ? Surely nothing. Again : "If we contend," says he, "that as soon as the mind is inclined towards one or the other side of the question, it is no longer free, than it is certain that there is no such thing as freedom of choice."

I answer : This is not contended by us, but the system which we oppose goes much farther than this ; it teaches, that the very first inclination of the mind, towards either virtue or vice, is produced by foreign and compulsive influence : so much so, that in our opinion, all freedom of choice is thereby destroyed, and man the noblest work of God, is a slave to mere *mechanical necessity*. On the principle therefore of Calvinism itself, there is no such thing as freedom of choice. But our author presents a case for illustration. Three men are required to do an act of charity, which will require something of a sacrifice : the first had never complied—the second had complied at times, but with reluctance—the third had never failed. When the request is made known, the first remains without deciding ; the second, after a season of suspense, reluctantly complies ; but the third determines with cheerfulness to do it. “ Now,” says he, “ was it not, previous to the trial, more certain that the third would comply with the request, than either of the others ?” page 70. To this I reply : There is no more certainty (much less *necessity*) or freedom, in the one case than in the others ; for it was no more certain that the third would comply, than that the first would not, or that the second would reluctantly. The third did not act more freely in complying, than the first did in refusing, or than the second did in holding his mind in suspense by reflection. When therefore Mr. H. asks,—“ And will not every person acknowledge, that of the three he (the third) acted the most freely ?” If we abide by the dictates of common sense, we must say no ; there was no more certainty or freedom in the one case than in the others ; and all there was in either, was merely inferred from past conduct. There was no real certainty in either : 1. Because men are not immutable. 2. Because *necessity* or *absolute certainty*, is inconsistent with free-agency ; and men

are free agents. 3. Because God has not decreed the *moral* conduct of men. We conclude, therefore, that, that choice which Mr. H. supposes was previously most certain, and at the same time most free, was neither the one nor the other: and of course *absolute certainty is not essential to freedom*.

Another argument by which Mr. H. would prove, that *necessity or absolute certainty is essential to freedom*, is the the following:—

“From the very nature of the divine character, it is certain that God will always do right. Shall we say he is not free?” Ah! now, sir, you have found *absolute certainty*! and absolute certainty arising from the very nature of the divine character; but unfortunately it is found in a being who cannot be made a similitude of in the case before us; for such is the very nature of the divine character, it is *absolutely certain* that God *will* and *must* always do right. Whereas, such is the nature, relations, and mutability of man, that he may, and often does, do wrong. To the question, “Shall we say that God is not free?” I answer, yes; we shall say that God is not free to do right *or wrong*, but *always* free to do right. Therefore certainty or necessity in God, forms no argument for either in man. I am surprised that Mr. H. should leave the impression, that the Almighty may do wrong! whereas the very nature of God, renders it utterly impossible. But let us hear him again:—

“Is it not certain that the devil will always do that which is wrong? If he be not free, how can he be blamed?” Ah! now, sir, you have found *absolute certainty* again! and absolute certainty arising from the very nature of the *infernal* character; but unfortunately while the other was *too high*, this comes from rather *too low* to form a similitude in this case; for such is the very nature of the *infernal* character, that it is *absolutely* certain that the devil *will* and *must always*



do wrong; whereas, such is the condition of man, being in a probationary state, and within the reach of mercy, and a free agent; and God not having decreed his *moral* conduct, he may by the grace of God sometimes do right. In answer therefore to the question, "If he be not free, how can he be blamed?" I answer: He is blamed for *sinning*, and for leaving his own habitation and first estate while he was free, and enjoying a probationary state.—II. Peter, ii. 4: Jude 6. He is reserved under chains of darkness to the judgment of the great day, there to be judged and punished for the deeds done in heaven. Can it be possible that Mr. H. is a restorationer! Having brought the case of the devil, who, by all but restorationers, is supposed to be beyond the reach of mercy, to illustrate that of man, one would be led to think that is the case; yet this cannot be, as the fifteenth section is directly against that doctrine. However, I suppose that he does believe, that the devil has *natural ability* in hell to love God, or he would not have represented him as being a *free agent* there; and this is not a very great remove from the restoration doctrine. Yet every one must see the gross absurdity of supposing a state of confirmation in misery, to be compatible with a state of freedom and probation. It is generally, I believe, considered to be a mark of scarcity when people far-fetch; if this be so, surely arguments to prove, that *necessity* or previous *certainty* is essential to freedom, must be very scarce indeed; for the wide extremes of *heaven* and *hell*, have both been ransacked to prove this favorite point; but whether with success, the reader must judge.

In the third and last place, Mr. H. attempts to obviate the objection under consideration, by a view of several circumstances recorded in scripture. "It will be readily seen, (says he) that in every prophecy, which is descriptive of the future conduct of men, this point is unquestionably establish-

ed." What ! that *necessity*, or *absolute certainty* is essential to freedom ? Surely not so readily seen, as if it were declared in the Bible ! The most that can be gathered from the prophecies of the future conduct of men, is, that the events were certainly known to God. But, as Mr. H. acknowledges, this knowledge has no possible influence in *rendering* those events certain or necessary. Hence they do not take place because he knows them, but he knows them because they will take place ; and because they will take place as the *moral* conduct of free agents, and not because he had determined or decreed that they *should* take place. But it may be asked—can a man do otherwise than what God knows he will ? I answer, yes ; or he is not a free agent.—But if it be asked—*will* a man do otherwise than what God knows he will ? to this I reply, no ; for this is in perfect accordance with the sentiment, that his choice originates in free-agency ; and not in Calvinistic fatality. But it may be asked again—what is the difference between *can* they, and *will* they do otherwise ? &c. I answer—a machine which is propelled by foreign and irresistible power, *cannot* do otherwise from what it does ; and therefore is not accountable for its movements. If there is any defect, either in the mechanism or movements of it, none but the architect can be to blame. This, and much more when applied to man, would be but a fair exhibition of the first question ; for, to suppose that men cannot do otherwise than what they do, (and such is the doctrine of our opponents, unless men can break the decrees of God) draws after it the following, among many, God-dishonouring notions : 1. That God created man with the express design that he should sin. 2. In order to secure this end, so "disposed of motives in his providence," as to lead him to yield to the temptation and partake of the forbidden fruit. 3. That God arraigned, convicted, and sentenced him to

eternal death, for doing what he had unalterably decreed he should do. 4. And yet after all, he invites the whole world to come and declares, that whosoever will, may take the water of life freely ! The second of those questions, supposes that God created man a rational and accountable being ; endowed him with freedom, and in order to render him accountable for his *moral* conduct, placed him under a moral government, set life and death before him, gave him the necessary information, and left him to act his own choice. Now, under this government, men will act as they do ; and God knows, and ever knew, how they will act. At the same time he knows, and ever knew, with "unfailing certainty," that they might act different ; and on this ground arises their guilt and condemnation. To suppose the moral conduct of men to be fixed and certain by the decree of God, and yet that men are free, and accountable for their conduct, is a palpable absurdity. I am not so much surprised, after a view of the subject which we oppose, that a gentleman, (not a thousand miles from this place) should say, that had he not been brought up under the administration of *that* system, he should probably not have been an unbeliever in the christian religion. The remarks which have been made on the first part of the third argument of Mr. H. will apply equally to the whole of it, as the whole proceeds upon the supposition, that the future conduct of men, could not have been predicted, had it not been fixed or certain in the plan of God. To say it could not have been predicted, had it not been "*known*," is not touching the controversy ; for who denies that ? This objection then, against the doctrine of God's universal government, (as held by the Calvinists) that it destroys the agency of men, is plainly *on a good foundation*.

## CHAPTER II.

*Same subject continued.*

MANY are the serious objections which our author finds in the way of his system. Another is contained in the following question :—"If all events are in the purposes of God, then he has determined the existence of sin ; and if so, is it not evident that he is pleased with its nature ?" To this question Mr. H. answers—"By no means ; such a conclusion would be equally at war with the Bible, and with the plainest dictates of common sense."

The reader will observe, that the question contains two parts. The first goes to say, that on the Calvinistic scheme, God has *determined* the existence of sin. To this, as well as the other part of the question, he says, "By no means," &c. Now, on page 67, he roundly asserts, that, "If some events are *determined* of God, the *whole* are." But here, that such a conclusion would be equally at war with the Bible, and with the *plainest dictates of common sense* !—Now, either sin is not *an event*, or Mr. H. has contradicted himself. If, however, he did not mean to negative the first part of the objection, then it remains unanswered ; and of course stands in its full force against the system of our opponents. Indeed he has not touched the first part of the objection ; for all he has said in answer to the *whole* question, is an attempt to show that God is not *pleased* with the nature of sin. Well, let us see how well he succeeds in this attempt. "Nothing could be more evident than that God was willing, *on the whole*, that his Son should be put to death.—For this purpose he was sent into the world. Now shall we conclude that this event in its nature, was pleasing to God ?" p. 71. I answer—this is taking for granted, what it is pre-

sumed no being on earth can prove, viz—that God was willing that his Son should be *murdered* ! To “*put to death*,” signifies to take away life in a violent way. Now that the Jews *felt* and *did* what is denominated *murder* in the scriptures, (though it did not actually take away his life) we all agree ; and that, what they felt and did what was an *event* we all agree. But that God had determined the Jews should feel, and do as they did, we deny ; and think it both impious and absurd to assert it. To suppose that God had determined, that the Jews and Romans should reject, and treat the Saviour as they did, is saying that he brought upon the Jewish nation, the most dreadful, and complete destruction, that ever the sun was permitted to behold ; and all for doing *what he had previously determined they should do* ! ! Let him believe this of the all wise, and good God, whose creed will not allow him to entertain more consistent views.

We have no doubt but the death of Christ, separate from what his enemies felt and did, was determined of the Father ; and that for this purpose he was sent into the world. But to suppose that the infinitely wise and holy God, was under the necessity of resorting to such measures as Calvinism supposes, is a gross reflection upon the divine character. Such however, according to that system, must be the conclusion, or we must suppose that God did not adopt the wisest plan that could have been adopted : either of which is monstrous. Upon the whole, we see no reason for believing that God was willing that his Son should be “*put to death*.” Again, the system of our opponents teaches, that the malice and wicked conduct of the Jews towards Christ, and indeed all sin, is for the *greatest* possible good. Now if it did not bear the *nature* of sin, according to them, it could not accomplish the greatest possible good. If this be so, is he not pleased with the *nature* of that which would do *greater good* than any

thing else? But once prove, that God has determined the existence of sin, and that on the whole it does greater good, where it is practiced, than a life of holiness would, and you have proved with the same stroke of your pen, that he is pleased with its nature.

To suppose that God decreed the existence of sin, and that it is for the greatest possible good—and yet, that he is displeased with its nature, is to say, that God is displeased with the works of his own hands, and that, too, while they are accomplishing the very ends which he purposed!

The death of Christ, separate from what his enemies did, was doubtless in the order of God, and of course was pleasing in his sight; for it manifested boundless love and perfect obedience on the part of the Saviour. But again, we are presented with several instances, such as the destruction of “the old world,” of the inhabitants “of Sodom and Gomorrah”—the “afflictions of God’s people,” &c. to show that God is not pleased with the nature of sin! Now who does not see the weakness of this argument? In order for it to have had any weight at all, the destruction of the old world, of the Sodomites, and the chastisement of God’s people should all have been sinful. To assert that the destruction of sinners, as the judicial act of God, and the chastisement of his people, as necessary for their good, are events with which he is not pleased, is not touching the controversy; for no one asserts that he is. But the task of our author was to have shewn that God is not pleased with the nature of sin, though he had decreed its existence. This, however, he has not done; and, therefore, the objection remains unanswered: that on the Calvinistic scheme God is the author of sin, and of course is pleased with its nature.

Another serious objection which he attempts to obviate, is contained in the fifth question; “Does not this doctrine re-

present the great Jehovah as insincere? Does it not represent him as inviting and commanding men to do one thing, when he is determined that they shall do another? ” p. 72.

The first attempt of our author to obviate this objection is, to say the least of it, a queer one. It brings to mind the old proverb :—“ Misery loves company ” But what is it? Why, ‘ it is no more difficult to meet this objection, for those who support the doctrine of decrees, than for those who believe in the absolute fore-knowledge of God. If God has created and upheld beings, when he knew with unfailing certainty, that they would violate his law, it would be impossible to convince any reflecting and unbiassed mind that he was not willing *on the whole*, that in these instances it should be violated.” Now suppose that these statements were true, (which, however, is not admitted,) does this clear the system of our opponents of its difficulty? Provided he could involve his neighbors in the same calamities with himself, it is presumed this would not help him out of his own embarrassments. What is it to one man what difficulties lay in the way of another’s system? It is his business to clear his own if he can. It looks like an unavailing effort to save a falling system. But our author supposes that the creation and upholding of free agents, while God knew with unfailing certainty that they would violate his law, forms a very convincing proof, that he was willing, on the whole, that it should be violated. Now the scriptures inform us that God is not *willing* that *any* should perish, but that all should come to repentance. To suppose that God is *unwilling* that men should perish, and at the same time *willing* they should violate his law, (which is the only way to perish,) is so grossly absurd, that every “ reflecting and unbiassed mind ” must see it. Again—what can be meant by the words “ *on the whole*,” so often used by Mr. H.? Surely it cannot be

meant that sin on a *large scale* is not so sinful as when committed on a small one ! I do not understand it unless it is that God is willing sin should be committed, as it stands connected with the universe, but unwilling that *individuals* should commit it. If this is what is meant, it draws after it the following absurdity ;—that God is willing on the large scale that sin should exist, but unwilling at the same time that the tributary streams which constitute the grand whole should exist.

Again—"it seems to be taken for granted, that God is willing his law should be violated, because he does not prevent it by an exertion of almighty power." If men were not free agents this argument would have some weight ; at present it has none. We shall now endeavour to shew that a belief in the perfect fore knowledge of God, does not involve us in the same difficulty which a belief in the doctrine of absolute predestination does its abettors. If God has determined or decreed every event, then every event *must* of necessity take place exactly as it was decreed. Now if sin is an event, he has decreed its existence ; and of course men cannot do otherwise than what they do, unless they can break the decrees of God. A moments reflection will show that if ever a part of the human family are lost, on the above scheme, it must have been decreed, together with the means conducive to the end. Now to offer life to such characters, and charge them with being their own destroyers, and tell them that every thing is ready for their reception, and threaten them with everlasting burnings if they do not comply, we say, represents the great Jehovah as insincere, and as commanding men to do what he has determined they shall not do. The doctrine which we advocate, supposes that the moral conduct of men is the result of their own determination, uncontroled by any irresistible decree, so far as



to destroy their agency. It supposes, also, that God knew, with unfailing certainty, how every person would act, and with the same unfailing certainty he knew, that we might and ought to do otherwise than we do in a thousand instances. Now to offer life to such characters, and threaten them with the curse of the law if they do not comply, &c. does not represent the great Jehovah as insincere; for while he offers life to those who he foresees *will not accept* of it, yet it is to those who he foresees *can and may accept* of it.—Moreover, if life were not offered even to those who *will not* accept of it, it is difficult to see how they could be free agents, and accountable for their conduct. But, as we have seen, the opposite doctrine represents him as offering life to those who *cannot* comply, and that because he has previously determined that they *shall not*!! Mr. H. will probably say that the reprobates have *natural ability* to comply with the terms of life, but he might as well say that they have natural ability to break God's decrees. Again; it will not be denied but the spring of all creation is benevolence.—This was no doubt the principle which prompted the Deity to create worlds with their innumerable inhabitants; many of whom possess intelligence and capacity to be governed by laws suited to their condition. From what we can discover, also, of the divine mind from Revelation, it seems to be the determination of God to govern all intelligent beings with a moral government; and, of course, men and angels, while they are in a probationary state, must be free agents, or they could not be accountable. Now to suppose that because the Almighty foresaw that some of his intelligent creatures would abuse their liberty, and ruin themselves, it was wrong to create and uphold such beings, ~~1st~~, to impeach the divine character with want of wisdom and goodness. 2. It would go to say, that he must dwell in eternal

solitude, or possess only the coarser praises of the unintelligent part of creation. Should a foresight of the misconduct of some, arrest the progress of his creating goodness? To this question it may be answered, if beings created are treated on principles of equity, and are not under any irresistible necessity of doing wrong, and what they are commanded to do, they *may* do, then to create while he foresaw that they would transgress, we conceive to be no impeachment of the divine character. But is this the language of Calvinism?—Does not that doctrine assert, that every event, even the most minute, is fixed by the eternal purpose of God? Does it, therefore, represent the great Jehovah, as insincere, to suppose he created, and upholds beings, while he foresaw that they would violate his law, but are under no necessity of doing so, as it does to suppose he created and upholds beings for the express design that they should violate his law and perish? It is in vain for our opponents to assert that the above is not their sentiment, while they continue to declare their belief in the eternal decrees. Let us now resume the examination of the other arguments of our author.

The second, by which he attempts to obviate the objection, is taken from three circumstances. 1. The death of the Saviour. 2. The offering up of Isaac by Abraham, and 3. God's command to Pharaoh to let Israel go. The object of our author, in these circumstances seems to be, to make out that God's revealed will, and his decrees are in opposition to each other. So that instead of answering the objection, contained in the fifth question, he assumes it as his sentiment, viz:—that God has "commanded man to do one thing, when he is determined they shall do another."

We have already seen, that to suppose the murderous disposition and conduct of the Jews, towards Christ, to have been determined of God, is, to say the least of it, grossly

absurd. . We shall, however, make a few remarks on the passage to which reference is made.

It is found, Acts, iv. 27, 28, "For of a truth against thy holy child, Jesus, whom thou has anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and counsel determined before to be done." On the authority of some of the best and most learned commentators of the present age, we may transpose, and read this passage, with a parenthesis thus;—"For of a truth against thy holy child, Jesus, (whom thou hast anointed to do whatsoever thy hand and counsel determined before to be done,) both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and people of Israel were gathered together." The former reading goes to say, that what Herod, Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and people of Israel, did, was what God's hand and counsel determined should be done. To assert this would be both "impious and absurd"; for what they did, was of a murderous character. Such a reading will appear still more inconsistent, if we consult the passage in the old testament from which this was taken. "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed." Psalms, II, 1, 2. Now to suppose that God had determined that the Jews and Gentiles should manifest the dispositions and conduct which they did, and yet ask, "*Why do the heathen rage, &c.*" is a reflection upon the divine character. Moreover, the reading which I have adopted, perfectly agrees with this passage in the Psalms; but the other does not so well. The latter reading, also, agrees best with the general tenour of the scriptures; for it goes to say, that what God's hand and counsel determined should be done, was what his holy child, Jesus, was anointed

to do. Now what Jesus was anointed to do, he will tell us by the mouth of Isaiah. "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he hath *anointed me* to preach good tidings unto the meek ; he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted—to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prisons to them that are bound," &c. Here we see that the reading we have adopted, leaves the Bible in a connected chain, without a link broken, and the character of God perfectly clear from every embarrassment. There can be no doubt but God's hand and counsel determined before that Christ should die, but that he determined that he should be *murdered* remains to be proved. Can any man in his senses, believe that God, by "placing motives before" Herod, and Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, led them to act the part they did towards the Saviour of the world, and then damned them for so doing ? This, however, is only of a piece with what a gentleman related not long since. After hearing a discourse which was strongly tinged with Calvinism, he remarked to the minister, that if he believed the doctrine of the sermon, he should contribute no more for the support of preaching. The minister, he said, replied, that it was possible God would so order it in his providence, that he would yet contribute a thousand or fifteen hundred dollars, for the support of the gospel, and be damned for doing it ! What wonder is it that so many of those who are brought up under such an administration, should take refuge in Universalism and infidelity ! ! These remarks are, to be sure, somewhat severe, but the case requires it ; and an Apostle has said, "rebuke them *sharply*, that they be *sound in faith*."

But suppose a man from impure motives, contributes for the support of the gospel, (and there are doubtless many such,) would he not be damned for so doing ? If he did not

repent he would be damned for his impure motives, not for the act, for that, in itself, is good ; and good is not evil. But let us next consider the offering up of Isaac. The event we are told, shows that God never intended that it should be done. Now, one of two things must be granted by Mr. H. here—that God was sincere, or he was not, in giving this command to Abraham. It is presumed no one will say he was not sincere. But if he was sincere, then he intended what he said. Again—a being who has authority to give commands, has an undoubted right to repeal those commands. When God, also, had sufficiently exercised the faith of Abraham, and called it forth for the view and example of after ages, he repealed the law which made it his duty to offer his son. Moreover, we have already seen, in another case, that where the disposition is felt, and exertions used to carry it into effect, the substance of the act is done. So in the case of Abraham. God commanded him to go and offer up his son—he felt a disposition to obey—by faith he used his exertions, and the act was, in this way, so far accomplished, that the Apostle, (Heb. xi, 17,) declares that he *did offer up his son*. I conclude, therefore, that this circumstance forms no argument whatever, that God “commands one thing, when he is determined we shall do another,” or that he uses duplicity.

We are next to consider the case of Pharaoh. Mr. H. observes—“He commanded Pharaoh to let the children of Israel go, but he declares that he hardened his heart to prevent it.” The same remark will apply here, as in the former case : *i. e.*—God was sincere in his command to Pharaoh, or he was not. If he was, then he meant what he said, and if he meant what he said then Pharaoh might have obeyed the command. Now if he might have complied there was no irresistible influence exerted on the part of

God, to prevent it. To suppose that God commanded Pharaoh to let the people go, and, at the same time, secretly influenced his mind to lie to Moses, and hardened his heart for the express purpose of preventing his obedience, is really monstrous; and were it not for the sincerity of those who assert such things, they would no doubt be blasphemous. But I believe them to possess far more sincerity than their creed allows their Maker to possess; for if any man who lays claim to but a common share of moral honesty, should act as insincerely, towards his fellow creatures, as Mr. H. represents the Almighty as doing to his creatures, he would be thought a monster in human shape.

But where does the Lord "declare that he hardened his heart *to prevent*" his obedience? He declares that he would harden Pharaoh's heart, *so that* HE WOULD not let them go; but I do not recollect to have seen any place where it is expressly said that he hardened his heart "*to prevent it.*" Again—it is said that Pharaoh hardened his own heart.—Can it be thought that God assisted him in hardening his heart, to prevent his obedience to his own commands?—Men do not generally need *divine* assistance to transgress the laws of God! The truth, however, appears to be simply this;—Pharaoh first hardened his own heart by repeated acts of wickedness; see the cruelties which he practiced upon the people of God previous to this time. No doubt but by these, together with his other sins, he had sinned away his day of grace. God had said of him, let him alone, he is joined to his idols—my spirit shall not always strive with man. When he had thus grieved the holy spirit, and the light that was in him had become darkness, God, in the judicial administration of his government, "sent him strong delusion, that he might believe a lie and be damned, *because*

*he had pleasure in unrighteousness,"* and not because he had reprobated him from eternity.

The act of God, then, was a judicial act, arising from the stability of his fixed plan of moral government. This act, however, had an indirect tendency to prevent his letting the people go—yet, it would be a gross reflection upon the divine character, to say that it was designed for this express purpose. Now the question is, could the Lord harden the heart of Pharaoh, as a judicial act, and at the same time know that that act would have a tendency to prevent his obedience, and yet not design that it should? If he could, then he was sincere in his command to Pharaoh, and his character is clear from all the mists of darkness which the doctrine of our opponents casts about it. I conclude then from the whole, that Mr. H. has not made it appear, that God's determinations and commands are in opposition to each other.

After labouring, as he has, to prove that God commands men to do one thing when he is determined they shall do another, he finds it necessary to say something in vindication of the divine character. Hence, his next attempt is to shew, that "if the determinations of God extend to the volitions of wicked men, his character remains unimpeached."

If Mr. H. believes that the determinations of God extend to the volitions of wicked men, so that by placing motives before their minds, he leads them to the very choice they make in every instance, of course he will not complain, if we draw the following conclusions from his system.—

1. When the sinner exercises the volitions of his mind and chooses to sin, it is because *God will* have it so.
2. When he cries out, O Jerusalem! Jerusalem! how often would I have gathered thy children, &c. it is the same as if he should

say, O Jerusalem ! Jerusalem ! how often would I have done, what I determined never to do ! “ O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider on their latter end.” O that they were what I determined they should never be. O that they would do what I determined they should never do ! Now if every event is determined of God, then he had determined that the Jews should never be gathered ; yet he declares that he would often have done it. But to return to his vindication of the divine character. The first argument runs thus :—“ Surely no one will contend that it would be just for God, *on the whole*, to be willing that certain events should exist, and wrong for him to determine their existence. By the “certain events,” here mentioned, I understand Mr. H. to mean sin ; and, if so, what a pity that he had not stated, in plain terms, that no one will contend that it would be just for God, *on the whole*, to be willing that *sin* should exist, and wrong for him to determine its existence. If it is true that God wills the existence of sin, we need not be afraid to assert it openly and plainly to the world. The *truth* needs not the artful coverings of human invention ; it will bear its own weight—if not let it fall.—I perfectly agree, however, with Mr. H. in this, that if God wills the existence of sin, it is not wrong for him to determine its existence. I believe, further, that if it were possible for God to lie, it would not be wrong for *him* to do so.—There is, however, about as much reason in the one case, as in the other. The whole tenour of Revelation declares the will of God to be against the existence of sin. The very first command given to man, after his creation, is an incontestible proof that the will of God is against its existence.—Every threatening found in the Bible, is a proof of the same point. And every manifestation of grace and mercy for the recovery of a lost and ruined world, is also a proof of the



point in question. Whenever it is proved, therefore, that God wills the existence of sin, the controversy will then be at an end ; for whatever he wills the existence of, must be right. Then we shall all sing with one, "Whatever is, is right"! To suppose, however, that an infinitely holy Being, wills an unholy action, and that an infinitely just Being wills an unjust action, and that a Being of inviolable truth, should will the existence of a lie, are absurdities too glaring to merit belief.

Next we are presented with a case for illustration, of a being possessed of all the faculties of a moral agent. "He is placed in circumstances where obedience and disobedience, and their different consequences are entirely at his option. Without the least influence from any other being, he chooses the path of disobedience. Now suppose that Deity has knowledge sufficient to see with clearness every act through his whole life ; that he sees, also, how he may overrule the whole of his conduct, so as to promote his own glory. Is this agent in any way injured, or his agency impaired, by this knowledge ? Or is it unjust for God to take the advantage of his conduct, to execute designs of benevolence ?"

In the first place, we deny, that, on Calvinistic principles, such a being does, or can, exist, as is described in this quotation.

We are there told that the being in question makes up his choice, *without the least influence from any other being*.—Now to choose, is an "*event*," and Mr. H. tells us that "the purposes of God extend to every event ;" and that his "*determinations extend to the volitions of wicked men*." If then, (as he argues elsewhere,) the mind is "*invariably governed by the highest motive*," and God, by "*disposing of motives in his providence*" leads men to the very choice

they make in every instance, how, I ask, is it possible, on these principles, for a being to exist, whose choice is made "without the *least influence from any other being*"? It is a little surprising that Mr. H. or Dr. Dwight, should have proceeded upon a principle so inconsistent with their general system! In the second place, Mr. H. abandons his doctrine of decrees, in this argument, and proceeds upon the principle of God's overruling providence. But his proving that it is just for God to take the advantage of the conduct of the wicked, for the promotion of his own glory, and the good of his people, by no means proves that the divine "character remains unimpeached," if the doctrine of Calvinistic decrees is true. This is the doctrine which it is the business of our opponents to reconcile with the usual character of God. I conclude, therefore, that the case for illustration which our author produces, does not answer the end proposed in the outset of the argument; for that was to show, that "if the determinations of God extend to the *volitions of wicked men*, his character remains unimpeached." Let this be done, and we shall think more favourably of the system which we oppose.

All the arguments of our opponents, do not, as we conceive, prove that sin is necessary for the promotion of the glory of God, and the good of his people, unless we can suppose that he had not wisdom sufficient to promote these ends without it. I apprehend, however, that the divine character needs not the aid of sin to cause its lustre to shine. In all displays of human glory, lights and shades are necessary—but the *divine* character, needs no shades to set off its glorious perfections to advantage. His own innate and unbounded glory, shines with more than the light of ten thousand suns—and all-independent of every other principle or being. Yet, he does see fit to spread his *declarative*

*glory*, by the works of his own hands, and sometimes even makes the wrath of man to praise him. But, to suppose that he “*produces*” the wrath of man, is degrading to the divine character. Again—he says, “that such a line of conduct, as that which the sinner would naturally choose, would not be, of all others, the best, taking every thing into view, to be overruled for the promotion of infinitely wise purposes, is more than men, or angels, *can know*.”

It is presumed that the line of conduct, which the sinner would naturally choose, (unless he should take it into his head to love God with ‘*natural ability*,’) would be a line of transgression. If so, it is presumed again, that both men and angels *know* very well, if the word of God may be relied on, that that line of conduct, which the sinner would naturally choose, is by no means the best to be overruled for the promotion of infinitely wise purposes. If God has commanded virtue; and forbidden vice, it was because he saw that the former is better than the latter, both in its nature and consequences. Eccl. ii, 13. If we have any confidence in the divine character, we must suppose, that infinite wisdom saw the best course to be taken, for the promotion of the greatest possible good, and that infinite goodness prompted the Deity to adopt that course. This being done, the divine law required obedience of the subjects of a moral government, for the attainment of this end. That law is a transcript of the divine mind, and exhibits what the will of God is concerning us. This is sure ground. This we are warranted in believing ; 1, from a view of the divine character, as revealed in the Bible. 2. From the commands of God, requiring obedience, and forbidding disobedience.—This is according to what is revealed ; and, if there is any *secret will*, yet behind, I believe, for one, that it is in perfect accordance with what is revealed ; and if not, and it is

*secret*, we know nothing of it, and, of course, cannot predicate either doctrines or arguments upon it. But, says an objector, if this be so, man has not answered the end of his creation ! Surely he has not—and why ? Because he was made defective ? or because he has transgressed ? If it is because he has sinned *without necessity*, then the character of God “remains unimpeached.” But if he has not answered the end of his creation, then God was disappointed—was he not ? If God were not perfect in knowledge, this would be a fatal objection but, as he is, it has no weight. No one was disappointed in the fall of man, but man himself. He expected to be a god, but found himself a poor wretched sinner. If virtue were not better than vice, surely an infinitely wise and good God, would never have commanded it. But he has commanded it, therefore it is the best. But, our opponents may reply, that virtue, in its nature, is better than vice, but not so good “to be overruled for the promotion of infinitely wise purposes.” I answer virtue is better than vice, or it is not. If it is, then there is no condition in which vice can be committed, in which it will be productive of so much good as a virtuous course would be. The existence of sin, or the overruling of it by the Lord, for the greatest possible good under existing circumstances, forms no argument that the way of obedience, (which was the ~~one~~ commanded,) was not the wisest and best. But what has been revealed in favour of virtue and against vice, forms, at least, a presumptive evidence that virtue could have been as *well*, if not better, overruled, for the promotion of infinitely wise purposes. Again—every one will grant, that that which produces the greatest possible good, “taking every thing into view,” must be, *on the whole, or, on the part*, the best. But if so, on the above principle, virtue loses much of its divine excellence, and vice its malignity. Moral evil becomes

good from its effects and consequences, and, of course, all distinction between good and evil is lost ! Thus we see to what confusion error would lead us.

There is no alternative, we must suppose, that in what God has said he was sincere : and, if so, what he commanded he intended should be done. To suppose, then, that he did not intend the thing that was every way the best, is a base reflection upon his character. Had mankind continued obedient to the first covenant, sin had never been known, and, of course, according to Mr. H. the greatest possible good had never been promoted ! This error is too glaring to be mistaken—every person must see it.

Again—our author supposes it may readily be believed, “ that some important purposes might be accomplished in a kingdom as extensive as that of Jehovah, by having it known to what conduct a spirit of rebellion would lead.” p. 73.—We think however, that *many* important purposes might be accomplished in a kingdom as extensive as that of Jehovah, by having it known to what conduct a spirit of sinless obedience would lead ; and this is our condemnation, that we have forsaken the good and the right way, and gone in a way that is *not good*. The whole argument of Mr. H. seems to proceed upon the supposition, that, because the kingdom of Jehovah is *extensive*, moral evil is necessary for the promotion of important purposes. But how the extent of the kingdom can render sin necessary, is difficult to see. No very good results have ever yet arisen, from a spirit of rebellion in the kingdom of God. The first of which we have any account, hurled legions to the bottomless pit. And it is to be feared that the second will do equal damage to the *human* race. Can we believe this, and at the same time suppose that purposes sufficiently important can be promoted thereby, to compensate for the loss of so many immortal

beings? No, sin is an intruder in the kingdom of God.—It brought death and all our wo—it forms no part of the kingdom of Jehovah, for that is a kingdom of “*righteousness, peace, and joy, in the Holy Ghost.*” Our author, must have mistaken the kingdom to which sin belongs; for it is an important ingredient of the kingdom of the devil.—Without it he would be at a loss how to accomplish the destruction of one soul. By it he “reigns in the hearts of the children of disobedience.”

He next undertakes to “show how the Deity *may* overrule the wicked conduct of men, consistently with the purity and holiness of his character.” p. 74. It is to be hoped that Mr. H. will find few, if any opposers to the doctrine of God’s overruling providence; so far as that doctrine is considered aside from the doctrine of absolute predestination.—

We shall, therefore, have no controversy with him, in whatever he may have advanced which adheres strictly to that sentiment. But his confounding them together, so often, renders it necessary to make some remarks on his following arguments. His first is as follows:—“The sinner is free in the strictest sense of the word; and that the great Jehovah, by so disposing of motives in his providence, should lead him to different acts of sin, than he would otherwise have committed but which while they are *no more guilty*; may be better overruled for the accomplishment of benevolent designs, can it be said that any injustice is done to the sinner, or that God has done any thing unworthy of his character?” In order for this argument to have weight, in clearing the divine character from the imputations of the Calvinistic system, Mr. H. should have proved two things; 1. That the great Jehovah does, by the disposition of motives, before the sinner, lead him to *different* acts of sin, than he would otherwise have committed. 2. That these acts of sin

are *no more guilty*, than the sins he would otherwise have committed. We have his assertion for it, but it, wants proof. Again—Mr. H.'s account of the condition of the sinner in the above, is utterly contradictory. First he represents the sinner as being “free, in the *strictest sense of the word*.”—Now his own account of this freedom, on the preceding page is, that the choice is made “without the *least influence* from any other being.” Let us now compare with this, his second account. In this, he says that the “great Jehovah, by so disposing of motives in his providence, leads the sinner to *different* acts of sin than he would otherwise have committed.” Leaving our opponents to reconcile these contradictions, let us consider the second argument. “If the divine influence be so exerted as to *restrain* the sinner, and thus render his criminality less than it would otherwise have been, it cannot be said that his agency is injured, or that he has been treated unjustly. If men cannot be restrained without having their agency impaired, what shall we say of the influence of the precepts, penalties, and threatenings of the Bible?”

We shall all agree with Mr. H. that the divine influence is often so exerted as to restrain the sinner, and thus render his crime less than it would otherwise have been. But how, we ask, does this prove, that, on supposition that God, by the disposition of thirty pieces of silver, before the mind of Judas, led him to betray his Master; the divine “character remains unimpeached”? The argument has no bearing on the subject. We grant that there is no injustice done to the sinner, by the restraining grace of God, but, on the contrary a great mercy. But the very reasons which render it highly proper for God to restrain the sinner, and thus render his criminality less, render it utterly improper for him, by motives of inducement, to lead him to commit sin. As to the

difficulties, therefore, arising from the peculiarities of his system, Mr. H. as we conceive, has not touched them with this argument. Again, he says, "when the mercies of God are abused by men, he is the *occasion* of their sin, though by means which ought to have the contrary effect."

Did not God, according to Mr. H. eternally design to be the *occasion* of their sin? and, if so, ought those mercies to have an effect contrary to the eternal will of God? But if they ought to have a contrary effect, surely they might, and if they might, then it was never decreed that they should not. Now if there is one sin which God did not decree the existence of, in justice to the divine character we are bound to believe, that he did not decree the existence of any sin.

Again—is the Almighty sincere in the gift of his mercies, or is he not? If he is, he is not, properly, the occasion of their sin. To suppose that he bestows them for the express design to ensnare men, and lead them to sin, is both impious and absurd. Let God speak for himself—"O, Israel! thou hast *destroyed thyself*." In the doing of a wicked act, who is the guilty person, he who is the *occasion* of it with design or he who is the instrument, acting under the influence of irresistible "*motives*"? If it be decided that he who is the *occasion* of it, with design, is the guilty person, then, on the principles of our opponents, God is the occasion of sin with design to be so. Now who does not see that such a notion, instead of clearing the divine character involves it in the deepest shade? The argument drawn from sagacious Luther's management, with ambitious Henry VIII., bears evident marks of imperfection. 1. It is not certain, (such is the depravity of the human heart,) that the motives of Luther were perfectly upright and pure; whereas, with the great Jehovah, it is certain that *his* motives are always so.— 2 If the motives of Luther were upright, yet it was not the



overruling providence of an infinitely wise and good Being. I am aware that Mr. H. sees this objection to his argument, and labours to obviate it, but has not, in our opinion, done it. Moreover, if the argument were sound, it would only prove that God overrules the conduct of men, in a way consistent with their freedom ; whereas, we have already seen that the doctrine of our opponents utterly destroys that freedom, and makes men mere machines. We conclude, therefore, that it is not an "impression so readily received by men," that if God overrule their conduct consistently with their agency, they are no longer free." But we know that it is an impression generally received by men, that if God has "fore-ordained whatever comes to pass," and in order to "*produce* every such event," "places motives before the sinner," so as to lead him to the commission of sin, they are not free agents. And who can blame them for receiving such an impression, when the plainest dictates of common sense teach that it is so ?

It will admit of a serious doubt, whether the man can be found who would "allege the doctrine of God's overruling providence, in a way consistent with his agency, "as the reason why he rejects the Bible." But there are not a few infidels in our land, who do allege it is a sufficient reason for rejecting the Bible, that they are taught by men that, *that* teaches that God has first decreed that man should transgress his law, and then determined to damn him for so doing ! It is not a matter of very great astonishment that men should allege *such* a sentiment, as an "apology for sin," and feel able to "silence every believer in such a doctrine." Again, our author is of opinion that there is no sentiment which "inherits a greater share of the blind and unreasonable virulence of the natural heart than this—that God controls and overrules the conduct of wicked men." p. 76.

By "controls" here I understand Mr. H. to mean the doctrine of decrees as the Calvinists hold them, i.e. that "God has for his own glory fore-ordained whatsoever cometh to pass." Now is it not possible that he has mistaken the better judgments of sinners, for "the virulence of their natural hearts"? There are many people who make no pretensions to vital piety, who, nevertheless, are persons of good judgment, and can discover a palpable contradiction in terms, as soon as any body else. How prone we are to brand every one, who sees cause to differ from us in sentiment, with being "blind and unreasonable," and as possessing a very large share of human depravity! But suppose that sinners are as blind and unreasonable, and possess all that *virulence*, against the system of our opponents, which Mr. H. thinks they do, did not God according to him, decree that such should be their disposition? If God decreed that they should possess such *virulence*, is it "unreasonable" for them to feel it? What! unreasonable to fulfil the divine decrees!! Surely this cannot be. Finally, to close his arguments upon the fifth question, he directs his readers to look at several events of divine providence, two of which he mentions. 1. The overruling of the corrupt government of the Romans, in sending the apostle Paul to Rome. 2. The overruling of the conduct of Joseph's bretheren. Here I would ask, is it the sentiment of Mr. H. that God, to have an opportunity to overrule the corruption of the Roman government, and the hatred and wicked conduct of Joseph's bretheren, decreed the corruptions of the former, and the hatred &c. of the latter? If so, we are sorry the sentiment is alleged without proof. "Now," says he, "If God could overrule the conduct of these men without the least injury to their agency, and if in these cases, his character can be vindicated, it certainly can be in every other." Not in "every

*other*”; for, it is presumed, it cannot be vindicated on supposition that the corruptions of the Roman Court, and the hatred and wicked conduct of Joseph’s bretheren, were brought about by the providence of God. What a sweeping argument! If the character of God can be vindicated in his overruling the wicked conduct of men, in a way consistent with their agency, it can be on supposition that he is the author of sin! Grand logic, indeed! He closes his remarks on this question by asking, “is it not pride and presumption, to assert that God has not knowledge and power sufficient to govern moral agents, without intruding upon the freedom of their actions, or staining the purity of his own character?”

I answer, it would be both—but who asserts it? Surely none that I ever heard. No—It is from the doctrine of the Calvinistic decrees that we draw those unhappy conclusions, which are so offensive to our opponents. That doctrine, we think, “intrudes upon the freedom of men, and stains the purity of the divine character;” and it is on this account that we oppose it. We feel, however, no disposition to accuse the supporters of that system with “pride and presumption,” and as wanting of “candour,” &c. for that charity which *hopeth all things and is kind*, &c. teaches us that our opponents may be as sincere in their views, as we are in ours.

Upon the whole, though, our author has had a somewhat lengthy struggle with the objection contained in the fifth question—it is not, as we think, obviated. We conclude therefore, that the scheme of theology advocated by our opponents, does “represent the great Jehovah, as insincere, and as inviting and commanding men to do one thing, when he is determined they shall do another,”

The sixth, and last, question, under this head, contains another serious objection to the system of Mr. H. It runs thus—"Does not this doctrine discourage exertions in the use of means?" p. 77.

The first effort of Mr. H. to clear his way through this objection, is the same which he used with a former one.—That if the doctrine of *unalterable decrees*, discourages exertions, in the use of means, the same difficulty will attend a belief in the foreknowledge of God. Thus we see that he is determined that his system shall not sink under the weight of so many objections alone; but, if it must go down, that of his opponents must go with it. But we have already seen in a former part of this examination, that the attempt is but a miserable shift, to hide the deformity of his own system. Should he, however, succeed in raising a difficulty in the way of our theory, from the foreknowledge of God, (of which, however, we entertain no very serious fears,) he would only add another to the catalogue of those which now lay against his own, for, it would seem, Mr. H. believes, in the knowledge of God, as strongly as any one else. Did we deem it necessary, more arguments could be advanced to show that the same difficulties do not attach themselves to the theory which we embrace, as do to that of our opponents—but those already advanced, are believed to be sufficient:

Again—Mr. H. has got up an objection against the foreknowledge of God, as the objection of his opponents, which few, if any of them, make. And what is still more surprising, he "cheerfully grants it!" His words are these:—"Should it here be objected that there is, in truth, no such thing as *foreknowledge* with God, but that every event, present, past, and future, are equally present with him, it is cheerfully granted." p. 78. We perfectly agree with Mr,

H. in the idea, that all things are present with the Deity, but we do not agree with him at all, in his concession, that there is not, in truth, any such thing as *foreknowledge* with God. Foreknowledge is the knowledge of an event, *before* that event transpires. In this sense, there is foreknowledge with God. But can it be that there is foreknowledge with God, and, "in truth, no such thing," at the same time?—But he says, "If all our conduct in the present world, and our final destiny in the world to come, are now present with the Deity, it is evident that a purpose can render them no more certain." But, I ask, would not an unalterable purpose, or decree, render them more necessary?

If you say it could not, then it contradicts the assertion, that the "knowledge of God has *no possible* influence on the actions of men." But if it be acknowledged that an unalterable purpose or decree, does render them *more necessary* than the knowledge of God, then it is evident that the same difficulty does not attach itself to the system of those who hold to the foreknowledge of God, as to that of those who hold to the doctrine of predestination. To apply his argument Mr. H. produces "the duty of prayer." "Is not," says he, "the hope that God will hear and answer our prayers, our only encouragement to pray? No Sir,—for another encouragement arises from the knowledge we have that if we do not pray, we shall neither be heard or answered. What encouragement has a man to pray who firmly believes that God has unalterably decreed whatever comes to pass? Why, if I should be so fortunate as to be one of the elect, my prayers will be availing—or, more properly, I need not pray at all. If I am one of the reprobates, prayer will certainly be unavailing.

Turn it which way you will therefore, there is no encouragement to pray. Again, he says, "But in hearing and

answering our prayers, have we the least expectation that he will do any thing that he has not intended to do?" I answer no—for he always knew, in the exercise of our free agency, we should pray. Therefore, his intention to hear and answer our prayers, is predicated upon his foreknowledge of those prayers, and not upon an unalterable decree that we should unavoidably pray. Here is the mistake and error of the Calvinists. For in the exercise of free-agency, we may or may not pray, as we choose and determine. But our author it seems has cheerfully given up *foreknowledge*! The whole argument proceeds upon the supposition that because all events are present to the knowledge of God, therefore he has unalterably fixed by his decree the existence of every event. But he does not see that if this were true, we are equally doing what God has decreed we shall, whether we pray or take his name in vain. And who does not see that this utterly destroys the freedom of men, and "discourages exertions in the use of means?" Again says he, "and if he have intended to hear and answer our prayer in any one instance, that intention, if he be unchangeable, must be co-eternal with himself."

Does Mr. H. mean any thing different from *decree*, by the term "*intention*" here? if not, let us have it without a covering. If he have decreed to hear and answer our prayer in any one instance, that decree, if he be unchangeable, must be co-eternal with himself. Now let us have the counterpart of this doctrine. If God has decreed to damn a part of the human race, that decree, if he be unchangeable, must be co-eternal with himself. Why, then, are sinners damned?—Why, because God eternally and unalterably decreed they should be. The existence of sin was only decreed as the means of getting them there. O, error! how hast thou imposed upon the judgments of men! But he goes on—"That

there is ground for encouragement for exertion, when the event is unalterably certain, and entirely dependent on the pleasure of God, is a doctrine which every man in practice believes." Not *every man* ; for there are not a few, who, to this day, continue to assert the Calvinistic doctrine, as the chief ground of their discouragement. For, say they, we are taught that our eternal happiness or misery is "*unalterably*" fixed. Now if God has destined us to everlasting happiness, he will see that the end is accomplished in some way or other. And if we are doomed to endless torments, it is not possible for us ever to be saved, unless we can break an unalterable decree. And although we are taught by the same persons, that we have "*natural ability* to comply with the terms of life," (and of course to break God's decree of reprobation) yet we do not believe it ; nor shall we, till we can believe the most palpable contradictions. Therefore, say they, we are discouraged, and think it of no use to exert ourselves in the least. And indeed we are considerably encouraged to live as we do ; for we are also taught by the same persons, that, bad as our lives are, our wickedness was all decreed by God, and is for his glory, and the *greatest possible* good of the universe ! That these are legitimate consequences from the system we oppose, the testimonies of thousands confirm. This however, it is possible Mr. H. will say, is the "*virulence* of the natural heart." But no, these are some of the plainest dictates of common sense ; and grow out of the system which we say "discourages exertions in the use of means." Again he says—

"Upon what other principle does the husbandman cultivate his fields ?" Upon what other principle ! Why, upon the principle that it is so far from being '*unalterably certain*' that he shall have a crop, unless he uses the means, and that faithfully, too, he will have none at all. This doctrine of our op-

ponents, would wrest from every minister of Christ, those arguments drawn from the terrors of the law. Upon their principle, we should have no other incentive to piety but the hope of gaining something ; whereas it is by no means the only consideration. A firm belief that our success, under the blessing of God, depends entirely on our own exertions ; as the *condition* gives life and animation to all our efforts in the pursuit of heavenly and divine things. Another consideration in the mind of every true christian, is the glory of God. But what encouragement can a man have to do works of righteousness, who believes that David glorified God as much when committing adultery and covering it with murder, as he did when writing the Psalms ? Again he remarks—“What encourages the sick man to seek a remedy, when he believes he has an appointed time on earth ?” I answer—a most happy inconsistency ! For if such a man should act consistently with such a faith, he would never seek at all.—When a man believes that God has unalterably fixed the moment of his departure out of this world, and the means by which it is to be effected, though he should be murdered by a fellow creature, and yet seeks a remedy when sick, acts inconsistent with his faith. Suppose, however, for argument’s sake that the appointed time is nearly arrived, in which God has unalterably decreed that a good man shall die. This man, from the hope that he shall recover, seeks a remedy, but all to no purpose—he dies. Now does not this man, by his exertions in the use of means, fight against the decree of God ? But this, too, was decreed, so that it is all right !—But says he, “The man that would plead the certainty of events, or his dependence on God, as an excuse for neglecting his health or his property, would be considered either an object of pity or of contempt.” p. 79. I know not that any one pleads their “*dependance on God*” as an excuse for



neglecting their duty. But it is a notorious fact, that thousands do plead the unalterable decrees, as a sufficient excuse for neglecting the health and true interests of the soul. And the happy inconsistency above mentioned, has saved thousands more of the believers in Calvinistic decrees from the same neglect: yea, and perhaps from both pity and contempt. If God has unalterably decreed that a man *shall* go to hell, *can* he go to heaven? Again, if he has unalterably decreed that a man *shall* go to heaven, *can* he go to hell?—Once more—has not God, on the principle of Mr. H. unalterably destined all mankind to one or the other of these places? Pray where now is there any encouragement for exertions in the use of means? Indeed, the man would be considered at least an object of *pity*, who, while he believes the above sentiments to contain the true doctrine, still supposes there is encouragement for exertion in the use of means!

We now come to the general conclusion under this head. It runs thus:—“Finally, we see not how God can be infinite in wisdom, power and benevolence, nor how the Bible can be true—we see not how men can be free, and have any encouragement to act; and more than all, we see not how God can be true to the interests of the universe, nor how any confidence can be placed in his government, if his purposes do not extend to every event.”

As the main point in debate, on the whole, is whether God has decreed the existence of sin, we shall make a few remarks more upon this point, before we close this chapter. First, then, our author cannot see how God can be infinite in wisdom, power and *benevolence*, if he has not decreed the existence of sin. On supposition that God has decreed the existence of sin, where is the wisdom or benevolence of the act? Is not one soul worth worlds like this?—And will not thousands of them finally perish? Pray what general

good has been, or ever can be done, by the introduction of moral evil into the universe, to compensate for the loss of so many immortal beings ?

Sin is the fruitful parent of all our woes and miseries.—Thers is not a being that walks or crawls upon the earth, or that flies through the heavens, or that lashes the mighty deep, but that feels the direful effects of sin ! The struggling agonies of millions of these beings, send up a continual cry into the ears of the God that made them, as they make their ingress into life. And who that takes a rural walk in autumn, but hears the expiring cries of thousands of “the busy tribes of flesh and blood,” making their exit out of time ? But ah ! view the woes and miseries which are entailed upon our fallen species, from the moment we come crying into life, to the hour of nature’s dissolution ! Yea, go and stand on the shore of that “lake which burneth with fire and brimstone,” and hear the groans, and behold the convulsive agonies of the damned, and add ETERNITY to this weight of wo, and then say if *benevolence* decreed all this.

Again, he sees not how the *Bible* can be true, unless his views of divine purposes are just. It is a given point that sin has come to pass ; but I do not recollect a single passage which states that God has “*produced*” sin. I believe there is no such text ; and therefore consider that the Bible is true, though our author’s doctrine be not so. But what is equally singular, he cannot see how men can be free, and have any encouragement to act, unless his doctrine of unalterable purposes is true. We are short sighted beings to be sure, but as God is “infinite in wisdom,” and the Bible true, and every where teaches that men are free, and every where holds out the greatest encouragement to act, and no where teaches that God has decreed the existence of sin, we believe men are free, and have abundant encouragement to act, while we be-

lieve the Calvinistic system to be erroneous. We also think that it has been shewn, in the course of this examination, that if the doctrine of our opponents were true, there is no free agency in men, or encouragement to act. Lastly, and more than all, he sees not how God can be true to the interests of the universe, nor how any confidence can be placed in his government, if his unalterable purposes do extend to every event. Now that the Judge of all the earth will do right, we can easily discover, from a view of his divine attributes; hence, we know that he cannot but be true to the interests of the universe; and, of course, the utmost confidence can be placed in his government. But how can this be if God has not unchangibly foreordained whatever comes to pass? O, very well; for, 1. God is infinite in wisdom.—2. He governs free agents with a *moral* government, and not by irresistible decrees. 3. All mankind may come and be saved. 4. God will finally Judge and reward all men according to the deeds done in the body.

To close our remarks upon this section we would observe, 1. We consider it to contain a mixture of truth and error. The doctrine of God's overruling providence consistent with the free agency and accountability of man, is a most important truth of the Bible. But the other doctrines, interwoven with it, and the one which Mr. H. labours especially to prove, we conceive to be a dangerous error, and fraught with most dangerous consequences, to the christian religion. 2. Without doubt it was the design of the author, to prove, that God has decreed the existence of sin, yet he has not come out as frankly and openly as the nature of the subject, or the understandings of common readers, require.

By "purposes of God" in this section, it is presumed nothing more nor less, is meant, than *decrees of God*. If so, why this ambiguity of language? Every person who

argues conclusively will see that Mr. H. believes that God "*produces*" sin; yet it is conveyed under the more plausible terms, "*every event.*" There seems to be a disposition to gain proselytes to this doctrine, but a fear to present the more prominent features of it, to the public. But as we have before remarked, truth needs no covering—the simple truth will bear its own weight.—The more plain and artless she is, in her appearance, the more likely is *she* to win the hearts of the children of men.

Finally, adopting the language of Mr. H. we say, we see not how God can be infinite in wisdom, power, and benevolence, nor how the Bible can be true—we see not how men can be free, and have any encouragement to act; and more than all, we see not how God can be true to the interests of the universe, nor how any confidence can be placed in his government, if he has unalterably purposed or decreed the existence of every event; but, if he has, then he decreed that Mr. H. should advocate this doctrine, and that I should oppose it.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### *Moral Government of God.*

THE Sixth section contains the views of our author upon this subject. By the qualifying term "*moral,*" in this section, it is presumed we are to understand a different government, from the one treated of in the preceding section.—and truly, it is widely different; for *here*, it is the "treating men as *moral* beings, giving them laws, and making them the subjects of rewards and punishments." While *there*,

it is an unalterable purpose or decree, by which every thought, word, and deed, whether good or bad, is fixed beyond the possibility of a change. It would not, however, require a very great stretch of thought to see, that, to suppose men are treated as *moral* beings, while their conduct is all fixed, involves a serious contradiction.

In answer to the first question, we have a concise and good account of the moral law. The second is the following :—  
 “What is the penalty of the law ?” As Mr. H. alternately uses the words *penalty* and *curse*, as meaning the same thing, I choose to use the word *curse* of the law : 1. because it is the term used by the inspired writers. 2. Because the word *penalty* is not used in scripture, (if I recollect,) at all.

The first attempt of Mr. H is to prove that “*temporal death*,” is no part of the curse of the law. It should here be premised that I do not contend that temporal death, spiritual death, or the evils of the present life, form the curse of the law separately ; but we shall inquire whether these do not partake of that curse, in their natures. Nor do I contend that these alone constitute the whole of that curse—eternal death, without doubt, forms a part of it. The first argument by which he would establish his position, is drawn from Gal. III. 13,—Rom. VIII. 1. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law ; there is therefore, now, no condemnation to them who are in christ Jesus.’

With regard to the first of these texts, we may observe, without doubt the apostle here refers to that branch of the general curse which is eternal death ; and in this sense not believers only, but all mankind in their *seminal state of existence*, are redeemed from the curse of the law, according to Rom. v. 18. “Therefore as by the offence of one Judgment came upon all men to condemnation ; even so, by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men,

unto *justification of life.*" And this seems, indeed, to be the sense of the Apostle, as appears from the context, for it is there stated that Christ was made a curse for us, that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles, through Jesus Christ. All this, however, does not prove, that temporal death is not another branch of the curse of the law. Again, viewed in relation to the law, the natural evils of the present life, and the death of our bodies, appear evidently to partake of the nature of the curse which God pronounced immediately after the fall; yet, viewed in relation to the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, it does appear that much of that which can be called a curse, is taken off; for 1. As a fruit of that redemption wrought out by Christ, the natural evils of the present life are sanctified to the good of believers, and made to work out for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. 2. Natural death, through the same blessed medium, is made the passage of the believer from a world of sin, sorrow, and pain, to a world of holiness and eternal felicity. 3. Through the same redemption is secured to all men, (and especially to believers,) a future resurrection from the dead. Hence, it would appear that in the passage under consideration, the Apostle had his eye upon that redemption which laid the foundation for all these blessings, and for a deliverance from eternal death.

With regard to the second passage brought by Mr. H. *i. e.* Rom. viii. 1, we would inquire, 1. Are not all men under the sentence of the law which says, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return"? 2. Did not God himself pronounce that sentence? Now if believers, as well as others are under this sentence, then the Apostle had no reference to this, in the above text, but to that condemnation which arises from personal and actual transgression. But the Apostle says, there is *no* condemnation, to them who are

in Christ ; and yet the above sentence lays upon them.— These are facts which cannot be denied. Yet there is no difficulty here, for we are not condemned *for-being* under this sentence, for as much as we were brought under it, not by our own sins, but by the first offence. “ By *one man* sin entered into the world, and *death* by sin, and so *death* passed upon all men for that all have sinned.” *i. e.* All have sinned in him, as their representative, as the cause why death has passed upon all. This perfectly agrees with the experience of at least every christian. He does not feel condemnation for being subject to natural death, and this blessing, also, is through the grand atonement.

The second argument of Mr. H. runs thus ;—“ If natural death be the penalty, salvation cannot be of grace. If the sinner in his own person, suffer all that the law demands, it is impossible to show wherein he can be saved by grace.” p. 82.

That christians do suffer the evils of the present life, and natural death, are facts which none will deny ; and that they who endure to the end, are delivered from all by the redeeming power of Christ, is equally true. Now, the question is, are these deliverances of *grace*, or, by the merit of our own sufferings ? Should Mr. H. say of grace ; I answer amen. Then although the christian suffers a part of the original curse, his salvation from all is of grace. Nor can he hope to come from the grave but by grace. As to the last branch of the argument, it is utterly foreign to the subject, except to those who contend that natural death is *all* the curse of the law ; for the question (with us,) is not whether if the sinner suffer *all* the curse of the law, salvation can be of grace ; for if he suffer all that the law demands, there can be no salvation at all ; for *eternal death* is a part of that curse. But the question is, whether the believer though finally saved from all, by grace, does not, on his way, experience in this

world, and at death, what constitutes a part of the curse of the law.

The principle argument by which Mr. H. would prove, that the *evils of the present life* form no part of the curse of the law, is the following :—" If these things are the curse of the law, then the afflictions and self-reproaches which men experience in the present life, must be exactly in proportion to their sin." This argument, also, proceeds upon the supposition that the evils of the present world, form the whole of the curse, which is not contended by us. But suppose these to be a part of the curse, how does it appear that we must suffer in exact proportion to our sins, in this life ?— May we not receive the rest in the retributions of another day ? That many have felt in this life, a part of what their sins deserve, is too plain to be denied. The destruction of the old world, of Sodom and Gomorrah, and of thousands of the Israelites in the wilderness, are points in proof of this fact. No man, in his senses, will deny but these things were sent upon them as a punishment for their sins ; yet, no one will contend that what they suffered was *all* that was due to their sins.

Therefore, if Mr. H. thinks that such a notion would " mingle the scenes of probation and retribution together," yet he will find it in his Bible.

The next attempt of Mr H. is to show that *spiritual death* is no part of the curse of the law. Whether it be or be not a part of the curse of the law, Mr. H. has, in our opinion, laid down a false ground of argument. If this be the curse of the law, " Christians are not entirely delivered from it ; and the Apostle's assertion that there is *no* condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, &c. cannot be understood." Here Mr. H. seems unfortunately to have set up general experience as a rule of argument instead of the word



of God ; for what if there never was a Christian on earth who “perfected holiness in the fear of God,” would this prove that such a thing is impossible ? Especially when God had commanded it ? That the generality of Christians live very far below the standard of Bible religion is a melancholy fact ; and that many have mistaken the dead formality of the generality of professors, for Bible religion, is equally true. But to the law and to the testimony, and there we shall find that Israel may be redeemed from *all* his iniquities—and that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from *all sin*—and that if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from *all* unrighteousness—and that herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of Judgment ; *because as he is, so are we in THIS WORLD*. I conclude then, that whatever be the standard of general experience, we may, and ought to be redeemed from all spiritual death in this life, and if we are not, the fault is our own, not the Lord’s. Nay, it is a melancholy fact, that many who have a name to live, are yet so far “of the works of the law, that they are yet *under the curse*.” But the character described, Rom. viii. 1, &c. was delivered from spiritual death, as appears from the following words :—“For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, hath made me *free* from the law of *sin* and *death*,”—and in the latter part of the sixth chapter, the Apostle speaks of being made *free from sin*, and of having our fruit unto *holiness*. Having started, then, upon a false principle of reasoning, the argument is without weight.

The substance of his second argument runs thus :—“If spiritual death be the penalty of the law, then our crime, and our punishment, are the same thing.” p. 83. This, like the former argument proceeds upon a mistaken principle ; from a wrong view of spiritual death. Indeed, he seems to have

fallen into the same unhappy dilemma, into which he supposes his opponents are fallen—that of confounding *cause* and *effect*. I understand *spiritual death* to be that state into which the first transgression plunged our first parents, and all their posterity. Transgression was the cause, spiritual death the effect. These, by Mr. H., are confounded together, when he intimates, that spiritual death is a crime; I mean that which was inflicted in consequence of the first offence. The state into which the first transgression brought the whole human race, was a state of total depravity. By this I mean total destitution of holiness, total darkness, as to spiritual things, and total weakness as to any moral action that is good; i. e. that all are born into the world in this depraved and destitute condition. But are they to blame for being born in this situation? No more than for their birth itself. We grant that if the scriptures, and the opinion of the greatest part of the Christian Church, from the earliest ages of it, to the present, are all to bend to the notions of Mr. H. in relation to original or birth sin; then, to be sure, the depravity of our natures in which we are born may be our crime, but not otherwise.

The third argument, proceeding upon the supposition that the depravity of our natures, with which we come into the world, is our own personal fault, of course will admit of a similar answer. We shall have occasion, also, to examine this sentiment when we come to treat of the doctrine of original sin—see next chapter.

Having made these remarks, by way of answer to the objections brought by Mr. H. we shall now present the reader with what we find in the scriptures, as direct proof that spiritual death, the evils of the present life, and natural death, belong to the curse of the law. And first of *spiritual death*. “And the Lord God commanded the man saying,

of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat : but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou *shalt not* eat of it ; for in *the day* that thou eatest thereof, thou *shalt surely die.*" Gen. ii, 16, 17. Here, 1. The law is given, thou shalt not eat of it. 2. The curse annexed,—thou shalt surely die. 3. The time when the threatening should be executed,—*in the day that thou eatest thereof.* The declaration was peremptory. No language could be more explicit. We all agree, however, that the execution of the sentence of *eternal death* was suspended ; God having designs of mercy towards the human family. If then they did not die an eternal death, nor temporal death, it must have been spiritual death. As the image of God, in which man was created, consisteth in righteousness and true holiness, when he sinned he lost both, and in this sense died a spiritual death. This part of the threatening was experienced on the day, yea, doubtless at the very moment they sinned, they felt an universal change throughout the whole man. This is evident, 1. From the shame they felt. 2. From their fear to meet God. 3. From the gross folly of their attempt to hide themselves.

Again—sin, throughout the scriptures, is represented as being productive of spiritual death—as blinding and hardening the heart. But it may be said that these are the natural consequences of sin, not the curse of the law. No doubt they are the natural consequences of sin, but does this prove they are not punishments still ? Who determined that sin when it should be committed, should have these *natural effects* ? Was it not God ? And why ? And for what purpose ? Surely they appear to partake of the nature of punishments after all.

In the next place, let us see if there is any thing to warrant the belief, that the *evils of the present life* form a part

of the curse of the law. "Unto the woman he said, *I will greatly multiply thy sorrows and thy conception; in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children, and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.* And unto Adam he said, "*Because thou hast harkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, thou shalt not eat of it: CURSED is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns, also, and thistles shall it bring forth to thee: and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread.*" Gen. III., 16, 19.

I presume none will deny but here are the evils of the present life, clustering in swarms around our wretched path. Neither can it be denied but they are *curSES*, while God himself denominates them such. Our only inquiry, then, is, whether these are inflicted as a punishment for the breach of the law or not? To this God will answer, *Because thou hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, THOU SHALT NOT EAT OF IT: CURSED is the ground for thy sake.* These are not "a few insulated passages," of scripture; they speak full and explicit on the subject. But let us next see if there is any thing to prove that *temporal death* is a branch of the curse. The last of the items of the abovementioned texts, contain the following words—"For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return," ver. 19.—The reason which God assigns for pronouncing this sentence, is the breach of his law. I see not how we can avoid the conclusion, unless we can prove that the sentence does not mean temporal death. I believe, however, that it is universally admitted that it does. Again—"By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon *all men*; for that *all have sinned.*" It is not said that the sentence only, but death itself, passed upon

all men. Now if eternal death be all the curse, then it must have passed upon all men, which is not true. Yet that he speaks of the curse of the law, the following words seem to shew—"For until the law *sin* was in the world ; but sin is not imputed where there is no law. Nevertheless, *death reigned from Adam to Moses*, even over them that had not sinned, *after the similitude* of Adam's transgression."—Rom. v. 12, 13. 14.

Let us now briefly examine the arguments of Mr. H. by which he would prove that *eternal death only* is the curse of the law. The first is very good, touching that part of the curse which is eternal death. The second runs thus ;—"Nothing, short of eternal death, will express the opposition of an infinitely holy Being towards sin." p. 86. Very true—but add temporal and spiritual death, and the ten thousand evils of the present life, to it, and it will express it still more. The same remarks may be made on the third and fourth arguments. The fifth is as follows—"Eternal death is threatened as the punishment of sin, throughout the Bible. The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life."—Here, that death which is the penalty of the law, is set in opposition to *eternal life*." True ; "and this is *eternal life*, that we believe on him whom he hath sent ;" which shows that the wages of sin is *spiritual*, as well as eternal death. For that spiritual death which appears to be a part of the curse of the law, is here set in opposition to that eternal life which consisteth in believing on Jesus Christ.

The next question on the *moral government* is the following—"If eternal death be the penalty of the law, what are natural evils which mankind experience in the present world ?" To this question Mr. H. answers—"They are the natural consequences of sin. When sentence of death is

passed upon a criminal, his confinement, and all its attending evils are not the penalty, but the *consequences* of his guilt." To this I reply;—But if the criminal is fully pardoned and justified from all which lay against him, ought he to be detained in confinement, and all its attending evils? Where would be the justice of such a course? That Christians do suffer the evils of the present life, and natural death, are facts which none will deny. Yet if eternal death be all the curse of the law, and they are fully delivered from that, I see not how such serious *consequences*, as confinement, and *all its attending evils* can yet follow. I am ready to believe that such is the goodness of God, that were it consistent with the honour of the divine law which we have broken, the moment we are pardoned, we should be delivered from all the consequences of sin. Contrary however to this, we find those who are "made *free* from sin, and become servants of God, and have their fruit unto holiness," yet the subjects of pain, disease, and death! I am therefore led to believe with Dr. Macknight, "That it is the curse of that more ancient law of works, under which Adam and Eve fell, and which, through their fall, came on all their posterity. Also it is the curse of the law of nature, under which all mankind, as the subjects of God's universal *moral* government, are lying for having broken that law." Again Mr. H. observes; "Besides, so far as we suppose mankind to suffer the curse of the law, in the present life, so far the *present* is a state of retribution.—It is a sentiment of scripture, that *at the day of judgment*, we are to render an account for the *deeds done in the body*." I answer; The same argument would prove that the intermediate state, from death to the judgment, is a state of *retribution*. For no one can suppose, that at death, saints and sinners go into a promiscuous company, and all share the same lot until the day of judgment. Yet who

would suppose, that the misery of the wicked from death to the judgment, forms no part of the curse of the law? altho' it is a sentiment of scripture, that *at the day of judgment* we are to render an account for the *deeds done in the body.*" The day of judgment will without doubt be the time of *final reckoning*, yet this does not prove that the Almighty does not often administer in a judicial way before that time. What did our Saviour mean when he said, "For judgment I am come into this world; that they which see not, might see, and that they which see, might be *made blind?*" John ix. 39.—Compare this with Matt. xiii. 13—Isa. vi. 9, 10, &c. and it will be seen, that God often sends *judgments* upon mankind even in this life. But this he tells us is "mingling a state of trial and probation, with that of retribution." So it seems in some degree, yet who are *we*, that we reply against God?—"Wherefore doth a *living man* complain, a man for the *punishment* of his sins?" Lam. iii 39; For even Zion saith, "The yoke of my *transgressions* is bound by *his hand.*" Again, speaking of the evils of the present life, he says—"These trials and afflictions are often important means of grace." True; Because God is able to bring good out of these evils; yet this does not alter their nature: they are evils, and I think, punishments still. In another part of his book, Mr. H. could very easily suppose, that two very different ends could be promoted by the same event; even the greatest possible good of the universe, and the damnation of the soul! But here, if the evils of the present life, are made by the blessing of God, "important means of grace," they cannot according to him, at the same time belong to the curse of the law! The former however, we deem to be highly inconsistent, while the latter perfectly agrees with matter of fact. See 1 Cor. x. 5, 6, Whenever

the evils of the present life are however, made important means of grace, it is through that blood which

—————"Through earth and skies,  
Mercy, free, boundless mercy cries!"

The next question contains another objection to the system we oppose. It runs thus—"If the evils of the present life, be no part of the penalty of sin, is it not unjust for sinners to suffer them?" p. 87. To this question he answers: "As it would be *just* for God to execute upon the sinner *immediately*, the penalty of the law, it cannot be *unjust* to suspend the execution, that he may give him an opportunity to repent and secure everlasting life; neither can it be *unjust* for God to send upon him, during this suspension, other evils, which are infinitely less than he deserves."

Here I would first observe—the question is not whether it is *just* for God to *suspend* the execution of eternal death, and send *other* evils upon the sinner, as means of mercy; but whether if eternal death be *all* the curse of the law, it is not *unjust* for sinners to suffer any thing more or besides that on account of sin.

Mr. H. tells us (p. 83) that "It must certainly be admitted, that all which the sinner deserves for his sin, is threatened by the law, if the law be a just and perfect rule." Very well, then: do sinners *deserve* to suffer spiritual and temporal death, and the evils of the present life? You dare not say they do not deserve them. Well, if they deserve them, then they were threatened by the law: of course they belong to the curse on his own principle. Moreover, does not Mr. H. tacitly acknowledge here, that the evils of the present life are a part of the curse of the law, by saying, that God sends upon the sinner "*other evils*" during the suspension of eternal death? Above he states, that they are the "natural consequences of sin," but here, that God sends



them ! If both these assertions are true (which I am inclined to admit) then although they are the natural consequences of sin, yet they partake of the nature of punishments still.— That they are sent in consequence of the original breach of the law, we have already shown from Genesis, third chapter. I see no other conclusion, than either from the scriptures or the concessions of Mr. H. but these things must belong to the original curse. We shall close our remarks on this question, by making two inquiries ;—1, Does God suspend the execution of the curse of the law in the case of the reprobates, “that he may give *them* an opportunity to repent, and *secure everlasting life* ?” What ! given *them* an opportunity to *secure* what he from eternity unalterably decreed they should never have ! ! 2. Are “the evils of the present life employed as means of mercy to convince” reprobates “of *their* guilt, and reconcile *them* to God ?”

Leaving the reader to reconcile these questions (if he can) with the doctrine of our opponents, we pass to consider the last question under this head. “If eternal death be the penalty of the law, was not the declaration of the serpent true—‘thou shalt not surely die’ ? and how was the contrary declaration of the Almighty fulfilled ?”

Here Mr. H. is under the necessity of acknowledging, that on supposition that eternal death be all the curse of the law, God did not fulfil the threatening—“In the *day* thou <sup>extest</sup> thereof thou shalt *surely die*.” But supposing spiritual death to be included in the curse, there is no difficulty in the subject ; for, in this sense, they did actually die, as we have before seen. The Almighty tells the truth, and the devil is still the father of lies. I see not but our opponents must suppose that the Lord made the above peremptory declaration without the least intention to fulfil it ; for it is certain that God did not inflict eternal death upon them in the

they ate thereof. Now if (as Mr. H. argues elsewhere,) at he did, he *eternally* meant to do, he certainly never ended to fulfil the threatening; "*in the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die*"! In what a light does this resent the divine character! But he says that there are thanks to Adam or the serpent, because the threatening is not fulfilled; yet, this does not prove that the serpent, in ordering to him, did not tell the truth, when he told them that they should not *surely die*. Again, he says, "If the penalty of the law were *any thing else*, if it were not eternal death, and if it were executed upon him; or in other words, if he did die in the day he ate thereof, then it was possible for him to be a subject of grace." I reply, 1. Whatever others say, I do not hold that eternal death was included in the curse of the law. 2. That he did die a ritual death on the day he ate thereof, is unquestionable. Now the question is, have the sufferings which mankind endure any merit in them, or are they of any benefit to us to detract from the grace of God? If not then we are no nearer what we ought to be for suffering in itself considered. Yet, after all, how can we "be subjects of grace?"—I answer with Mr. H. that it was through infinite *grace* that eternal death was not executed immediately upon Adam and his apostate wife. 2. It is by *grace* that we are raised out of the low dungeon of spiritual death. 3. It is by *grace* that the numerous evils of the present life are sanctified and made to work for good to them who love God. 4. It is by *grace* that it can be said—"Precious in the sight of the Lord, is the death of his saints." 5. It is *grace* that will one day reach even to the dust of the tomb, and reanimate slumbering millions of the dead! Hence—

"'Twas great to speak a world from nought,  
But greater to redeem."

To close our remarks on this subject, we would observe, that we do not consider that a knowledge of the exact extent of the curse of the law, to be among the most essential points in theology. Yet, as it is confessedly of more or less importance, we have thought proper to make the foregoing observations, and leave every person to read, compare, and finally judge for himself.

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## CHAP. IV.

### *On the Character of Man.*

THE seventh section of the Christian's Instructor, contains the views of Mr. H. on total depravity. Here, if I rightly understand him, he denies that most important doctrine of original or birth-sin, which has been handed down from the earliest ages of the Christian Church. "Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam, but it is the corruption of the *nature* of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and of his own nature inclined to evil, and that continually." And again, "The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such, that he *cannot turn* and prepare *himself*, by *his own natural strength and works*, to faith, and calling upon God; Wherefore we have *no power* to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will."\*

To show that Mr. H's views of depravity are not accord-

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\* Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, p.p. 10, 11—twenty-second edition.

ing to those of the Christian church in general, we only need to quote the following words of his—"To suppose that sin, or depravity, to consist in any thing but the voluntary actions of the soul, is to impeach the character of God," &c. p. 90. Here it will be observed, he does not allow that man possesses *any depravity*, but what consists in *voluntary action*; of course until we are capable of *voluntary actions of the soul*, there is no depravity in our natures! That he means by the actions of the soul, *moral actions*, is plain from his calling our fallen state, "*moral depravity*." p. 88. Now if the views of Mr. H. are just, one of two things is true.—1. We are not depraved till some time after we are born; or, 2, We are capable of *moral action*, (which implies a *knowledge* of a moral law) even before we are born into the world!! Which of these absurdities he will choose, I know not; he may however say, that he does not contend that we have any capacity to do moral actions *before* we are born. This, however, will help the matter but a very little; for even then we are capable of moral action, the moment we are born, or are without the least depravity until we are capable of knowing sufficient of God and his law, to commit actual transgressions. Every one's experience however, teaches him, that he has no conception whatever of right or wrong, until a considerable time after he is born: and of course, is not capable of any moral action. And for aught that Mr. H. can prove to the contrary, we have souls for weeks and months *before* we are born.

Again, that he denies the doctrine of total depravity as it is commonly held, will appear from his remarks on p. 89.—He says, "We frequently hear depravity represented as a *nature* that exists in the soul previous to all voluntary action," &c. We presume that he has frequently heard depravity represented as a *nature*; for he has no doubt often

read and heard read, the fifty-first Psalm; especially the fifth verse—"Behold, I was *shapen* in iniquity: and in sin did my mother *conceive me*." Here indeed is depravity even from the conception! Mr. H. will say, true; but it was the mother's. But I ask whether David was confessing his mother's depravity or his own?—Read the Psalm and see. See also Eph. ii. 1, 2, 3, where the Apostle argues from the stream back to the fountain. He commences with actual sin, and closes by saying, "And were by *nature* children of wrath even as others."

Again he says, "Man, with all his faculties, as he came from the hand of God, cannot be considered (aside from his conduct or actions) as either praise or blameworthy." Empty sound!—Who ever asserted that he could? We are not considering man as he came from the hand of God, but as he came from the loins of his first father. Therefore, all he says to prove that our nature was not unholy when created, is mere beating the air. His arguments in general under *this question*, all proceed upon the supposition, that we were not condemned on account of Adam's transgression. Now as this is a point which he has not proved, his arguments built upon it are of no weight at all. We shall have occasion to examine this question more at large presently. We shall next pass to consider the question on the 94th page: it is this—"In what sense did the whole human race fall with Adam?"

In answer to this question, Mr. H. observes, that "the apostacy of Adam's posterity, was *in consequence* of his disobedience." But to ~~show~~ that by the apostacy of Adam's posterity, he does not mean any depravity of nature previous to voluntary and moral action, we only need to consult the following words of his—"When Adam became a sinner, by the same principle that the offspring in every other species,

must be like its progenitor, his offspring were sinners." p. 95. Now "where there is no law, there is no transgression." Therefore as we observed before, according to Mr. H. the posterity of Adam must be capable of knowing sufficient of God and his law, to act under a consciousness of their accountability, from the first moment of life, or they are without the least depravity for some time after their birth. But how did they fall *with him*?—1. They were all in his loins when he fell.—2. In consequence of this, they all come into the world with a depraved *nature*: 'And Adam begat a son in his own *likeness* and after his *image*.' Mr. H. has quoted this text, it would seem, for the purpose of proving that the *likeness* and *image* of Adam, were actual transgression! This however he must prove before this text will be of service to his theory. It is presumed it will be difficult for any man to prove, that the image which Adam conveyed to his posterity, was *moral action*. And indeed could it be proved, it would in a great degree lessen the criminality of sin in his posterity; for if Adam by natural generation conveyed to his children *actual sin*, they certainly had no hand in *being* actual sinners. Hence on this principle, whatever they do afterwards, they cannot be to blame for being *born actual transgressors*! But it may be said, that the same consequence will follow from the doctrine of *natural* depravity. I answer no; for we are not personally guilty for being born into the world in a depraved state; but all *actual transgressors* are personally guilty (according to Mr. H.) for being actual sinners at the birth. It is presumed no one ever felt condemned for being born into the world in a depraved condition; but, for following the dictates of that depravity in opposition to a *known moral law*. Corruption of *nature* we receive by natural generation: corruption of *practice* is our own. The former is ours only in consequence of the first

transgression. The latter is ours by our own fault. If so, says one, then we should not commit actual sin if we were not first naturally depraved. I answer, I do not know that since Adam and holy angels did. Actual transgression was first, and then natural depravity followed where natural generation existed. Yet after all, says another, *can* we avoid acting out our natural depravity? I answer, Not with our *natural abilities*, but by the grace of God that bringeth salvation, and that hath appeared to all men we may and ought to avoid it.

Upon the whole, I conclude that we did fall with Adam, but in a sense widely different from the one Mr. H. advocates. The next question however will give us a further opportunity to examine this subject. It is as follows—"Is the sin of Adam in any sense ours, or are we blameable for his sin?" p. 95. In answer to this question Mr. H. observes, "It is difficult to form any conception, how one being can violate a law for another, especially a law that will accept of no service but that of the heart." I reply; it is not pretended that I know of, that Adam's actual transgression is our actual sin; but that the effects of his sin are ours, we know but too well by sad experience. Again, he seems to suppose that it is a very strong argument against the doctrine which we advocate, that it is difficult to form any conception *how* the thing can be; but if the mysteriousness of a doctrine is an argument against the truth of that doctrine, the very existence of God himself is liable to be doubted on the same principle: for who can find out the Almighty to perfection? He goes on—"Is it not a point in which all are agreed, that in order that we might be the subjects of praise or blame, we must possess the faculties of moral agents?" I answer yes, in every case where we are to act for ourselves; but not where another is appointed to act for us, as in the case of

Adam and his posterity. Can we not form some idea how the doings of a minister of state affect not only the present generation, but generations yet unborn? Surely we can.—But suppose we could not form any conception *how*, yet if the fact is established by undeniable evidence, we shall feel bound to believe it. Well, let us examine the evidence.—Mr. H. has quoted two texts from the fifth chapter of Romans, (verses 11, 19) as those which he supposes we should bring forward to establish this doctrine; but although taken in connexion with the rest of the chapter, they doubtless mean the same thing; yet because they admit of controversy, and because we have enough without them, we shall not rely particularly upon them at this time. The first we shall produce is Rom. v. 18.—“Therefore, as by the offence of *one*, judgment come upon *ALL* to *condemnation*.” What language could be more explicit than this? Here the offence of Adam is said to be the cause why all men are condemned. Again, “For the judgment was by *one* to condemnation;” ver. 16. This text if possible is more decisive than the former; for while that attributes the universal condemnation to the offence of *one man*, this attributes it to *one offence*. That this is the true meaning of the 16th verse, will appear from this;—The *one* offence to condemnation, is set in opposition to the *many offences* unto justification. At verse 15 the Apostle lays it down as an established point, that “Through the offence of *one*, *many* be dead.” Again, “For until the law, sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed where there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression.”

Now we know that the similitude of Adam’s transgression was that of *actual sin*; and yet it is here stated that death reigned even over those who had not sinned actually, as he



did. And as a further confirmation of this sense of the text, the persons referred to had no knowledge of the law, (as Adam had) and actual sin was not imputed to them : and yet death reigned over them. The reason of which is over and over stated to be the one offence of Adam. If we want more proof that our natural death is in consequence of Adam's sin, we may find it 1 Cor. xv. 22.—“For as IN *Adam* all die.” No one will say that the Apostle here does not mean the death of the body, as he is treating particularly of the resurrection. But if so, then we all die for Adam's one offence.

Again, if Mr. H. supposes that the death of our bodies is occasioned only by our own actual transgressions, and not by Adam's one offence, we should be extremely glad if he would account for two circumstances.—1. The death of children, in the embryo state.—2. For the afflictions and death of the brute creation. Do infants sin before they are born, as the cause of their often going from the womb to the grave? Do the brute creation sin against God, as the cause why *they* suffer death? Once more,—When God pronounced the curse of thorns, thistles, toil and temporal death, upon our wretched world, did he not say to Adam, *Because thou hast eaten, &c.*? Alas! it is but too plain, that all mankind are involved in the fall of Adam!

Let us next examine the passage which Mr. H. supposes is irreconcilable with the doctrine we support.—“The soul that sinneth—it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son : The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.” Ezek. xviii. 20. By consulting the 2d and 3d verses of this chapter, we shall find a key to this text—“What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel; saying,

The fathers have eaten our grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge? As I live, saith the Lord God, ye shall not have occasion *any more* to use this proverb *in Israel*." It would seem, then, that they had formerly *had occasion* to use this proverb. But what gave occasion for the use of this proverb in Israel? Doubtless the declaration of the Almighty, *Exod. xxxiv. 7*, that he would visit the iniquities of the fathers upon their children, &c. Instances of this are found both in the old and new testaments. See *II. Kings, xxiv. 3, 4*, where the sins of *Mannasseh's* reign, were visited on *Jehoiachin* and his people. See also *Math. xxiii. 35*, where all the righteous blood shed from *Abel* to *Zacharias*, was to be required of one generation. After all, however, I believe that these things are spoken particularly of the Jews as a nation, and with a direct reference to the rigor of the dispensation under which they lived; and are not of so general application to any as to them.—*Jer. xxxi 27, 35*. If this is a just view of the subject, then the passage brought forward by Mr. H. to show that we do not suffer for Adam's sin, has no reference to the subject of debate. The next question is as follows—"Is not the doctrine of total moral depravity inconsistent with the perfection of God?" p. 96. As the answer of Mr. H. to this question, is much the same as his remarks on the universal government of God, we shall make but a few remarks upon what is here demanded.—Speaking of many people he says—"They receive it as conclusive evidence, that he did not in any sense, wish to prevent it, and of course, that he is not opposed to sin."—Well, does Mr. H. suppose that God does wish to prevent that, which according to him, is for the greatest possible good? And if not do they not reason conclusively, who say that, on this principle, he is not opposed to sin? What!

opposed to what "infinite wisdom saw best *on the whole* should exist ! "

Again, he says,—“ He might have established our race in a state as perfect as that of angels.” And what evidence have we that he did not ? The fall of man is no evidence that he did not, for angels fell. But they did not all fall.—True—because one did not stand or fall for all the rest, as in the case of Adam and his posterity. But if he had established man in a state as perfect as angels, “ How would it have been possible for him to have exhibited many of his perfections, which will now be seen with endless and increasing lustre ? ” I answer we cannot tell *how* he would have done it ; but as he is infinite in wisdom, power, and goodness, we believe he would have found out a way without the aid of sin. He next refers to the case of Joseph’s brethren, and asks,—“ Was it consistent with the character of God, so to overrule their conduct as to make it the occasion of great blessings to them and their posterity ? ”—I answer, it was not ; but what has this to do with the question in debate ? The question at issue is, whether the *introduction* of moral evil, is consistent with the perfections of God, and not whether it is consistent for him to overrule sin when it is *introduced*. The latter no one denies, but the former remains to be proved if Calvinism be true.

His next argument is the same in substance, only on a larger scale.

The next question is in relation to free agency. He observes, “ Is not this doctrine inconsistent with free agency.” This subject, also, has been considered in a former part of this work, yet we shall notice a question or two, of Mr. H. here. “ What is there in the nature of sin, that is more inconsistent with liberty of action, than holiness ? ” I answer, of holiness Christ observed,—“ If the son shall make you

abandoned the idea that the sufferings of infants are on account of the first transgression, he finds it necessary to account for their being treated as sinners. That they suffer the evils of the present life, and natural death, are facts too plain to be denied; but how does he account for these things on his principle? Why, astonishing to relate! he attempts to make it appear that an infant, not a day old, and that knows not its right hand from its left, or its father from its mother, or whether it has any, is capable of knowing sufficient of God and his law, the nature and work of repentance, faith, &c. to act under a consciousness of its accountability to God!! If this is the most easy way of getting along with this subject, I am not surprised that Mr. H. should consider it a most difficult question to answer.

This seems to be the substance of his argument. The evils of the present life, and natural death, are the natural consequences of actual transgression; but infants do suffer both—therefore, infants are *actual sinners*. The flaw in this argument is in the first proposition; for although the evils of the present life and death, are the consequences of actual sin; yet it was the actual sin of Adam, not of infants. 1. Cor. xv. 22. "*In Adam all die.*" "By the offence of *one*, judgment came upon *all*." To prove that infants are actual sinners, Mr. H. quotes Rom. v. 12. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." It is readily granted that in some sense all have sinned; but it is not granted, neither can it be proved, that *infants* are *actual sinners*. The Apostle, it would seem, apprehended that such a use might be made of this text, by some, and therefore adds the following words,—"*For until the law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed where there is no law.*—Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over

*them that had not sinned, after the similitude of Adam's transgression."*

Whoever the persons were of whom the Apostle says, they had not sinned as Adam did, it is certain they were not *actual* sinners, for this was the similitude of *his* transgression. It is also certain that where there is no knowledge of a law, there is *no sin imputed*. Now the Apostle certainly meant to apply these remarks to somebody who lived at the time mentioned, (from Adam to Moses,) and that it cannot apply to adults, is equally true, for there are none who are entirely without law.—Rom. ii. 14, 15. The conclusion is they were infants. They had, in some way, so fallen, in Adam, and percpitated in the consequences of his sin, that they suffered death on account of it, and yet *actual* sin was not imputed to them. I conclude, then, that taken in its proper connexion, the twelfth verse is only designed to teach that as by *one man*, sin entered into the world, and death by sin, *and so*, (*i. e.* by one man,) death passed upon all men, for that all (in him as their representative,) have sinned.—Again, he says,—“But what evidence have we, that they may not be actual sinners, as soon as they are born?” p.98.

I answer, this is a manifest begging the question. Mr. H. has assumed the affirmative, and it is his business to support it. Men are very prone to wish to shift the laboring oar upon some one else, especially, when they have a heavy current of evidence against them. However, we shall not refuse to ply the oar of truth a few moments in defence of the Gospel of Christ. 1. Then, infants have no knowledge of any moral law whatever; and until they have, there can be no actual sin. Rom. v. 13. That some knowledge of law is necessary to constitute *actual* sin, is also evident, from the words of Christ; “If ye were blind, ye should have sinned; but now ye say, we see, therefore your sin *should* have remained.”

John, ix, 41,—see also, John, xv, 22, 24. 2. They are not capable of repentance, faith, or any moral action ; at least we have no evidence that they are ; the whole is, therefore, mere presumption, and not to be relied on. Common sense teaches the reverse. And to suppose that God has placed them in circumstances where they can sin, but cannot repent, is a base reflection upon his character. 3. The commands of the Gospel are not addressed to infants, but to persons capable of understanding and complying with them.—Neither do I believe that Mr. H. was ever known to give godly advice to an infant of a day old ! 4. We have not the least intimation from the word of God, that a single infant was ever lost ; neither have we any evidence that they repent. If, therefore, they are actual sinners, many of them may be damned, which is contrary to the express declaration of Christ. “Even so it is not the will of your Father, which is in heaven, that *one of these little ones should perish.*” And how often did he say, “Of *such* is the kingdom of heaven.” ?

But if infants are actual sinners, one of two things is true ; either all who die in infancy repent, believe, and love God, before they die, (though they should live but one hour,) or some infants are damned ! I know not which of these alternatives Mr. H. will choose, but if he is a consistent man, he must choose one or the other. Again he says,—“It must be supposed that they possess all the faculties of soul, that are possessed by adults, or they cannot be moral beings. If the faculties, though feeble, be not entire, we cannot conceive how they can be moral beings ; of course we cannot conceive how they can be subjects of rewards or punishments.” To this I reply—Mr. H. has here conceded one of three things. 1. That infants are *punished* for the sin of Adam—or, 2, that they are for their own sins, in *this life*—

or, 3, that they are punished with everlasting death in the world to come. The first, (that infants are obnoxious to natural death for Adam's sin,) he objects to. The second (that they are punished in this life for their own sins,) he also objects to, and thinks it would be "mingling the scenes of probation and trial with those of retribution." p. 87.—The third is, of course, his sentiment, viz :—that infants are punished with everlasting death, in the world to come. But further, what is it to be a "*moral being*"? Is it not to be the subject of a moral government; and must not the subject be acquainted with the law under which he is to act, and according to which he is to be judged? And must not the capacity of the subject be equal to the demands of the law? Now let common sense answer the question, whether an infant of a day old, is a moral being, or capable of committing actual sin! But he says, "it must be supposed that they possess all the faculties of soul which are possessed by adults." And so does the germ of every plant, possess all the properties of a full grown plant in miniature; but who, in his senses, could expect, on this account, that a young scion can bear fruit? As soon, however, might this be expected, as that an infant, of a day old, can be expected to bear the fruits of righteousness! But if they are not "*moral beings*, how can they be the subjects of rewards or punishments?" With respect to *rewards*, I answer, the *sufferings* of this present time, which are but for a moment, work out for *them*, a far more exceeding and an eternal weight of glory, as well as for the adult Christian. Moreover the meritorious cause of *their* rewards, is the same as those of adults. "By the righteousness of one, the *free gift* came upon all men unto justification of life." "The *gift of God* is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." As to *punishments*, although they are involved in suffering on account

of the first transgression, yet they are not guilty of actual sin; and as to *future* punishments, not one of them all who die in infancy, will ever taste one drop of that cup.

Again, he observes, "It is universally conceded by all who believe the Bible, that there will be none of our race received to heaven, but through the mediation of Christ. But surely we cannot suppose that they can be pardoned through his blood, when they are so far from being moral agents as not to possess an entire soul." Here again Mr. H. takes for granted what he should have proved, viz. that infants are actual sinners. When he proves this, then he may talk of *their* being pardoned. But if they have no *actual sin* to be pardoned, how can they be "received to heaven through the mediation of Christ?" Why, by the same rule that the work of sanctification and glorification are both through the mediation of Christ in the case of adults who die pardoned. The depravity of their natures is washed away in the atoning blood before they are received to heaven. Hence all that reach that happy world, will delight to sing, "Unto him that loved us and *washed* us in his own blood," &c.

Another error into which Mr. H. has fallen, is the confounding the soul with its faculties. He seems to suppose that if the infant do not "possess all the faculties which are possessed by adults, they have not an *entire soul*!" Suppose the *soul* and its *faculties* to be the same thing, and how easy a matter is it to show, that man has *no soul* after death! Mr. H. will not deny but *reason* is a faculty of the soul; and yet it is certain that this is often suspended while we are dying. The same may be said of the faculty of memory. Moreover, if his principle be true, there are thousands of *adults* who have not an "entire soul;" for how many are there who have lost their reason! But again he says, "But if it be granted that they are in possession of all the faculties



of the soul, it will be impossible to prove that they are not capable of moral action." Here I would observe, Mr. H. begs the question again. It is his business to prove that they *are* capable of moral action. This it seems he cannot do, and therefore he wishes to set his opponents at work to prove the negative. We trust however that we have before shown that the thing is impossible. But he goes on—"They must be as capable of exercises, according to the strength of their faculties, as adults." True, but not moral exercises; for this implies a knowledge of a moral law which infants do not possess. But, "These exercises must have a nature." Certainly, but not a moral nature, for the reasons already assigned. He goes on—"And that nature must be either in conformity to the law, or opposed to it; and it is as easy for the Deity to discover which, as in the most prominent actions of adults." With regard to the exercises of infants being either in conformity to the law, or opposed to it, I deny that they are either; for they are not performed under a consciousness of any accountability whatever. But "the Deity can discover which." O yes, and it is equally as easy for him to discover, that sin is *not* imputed where there is *no law*. But let us hear him a little farther.—"It is supposed by many, that no being can be guilty of violating a law, who does not possess a knowledge of that law." "But if this be true, the heathen cannot be guilty of sin, as they know nothing about the law." p. 99.

It is believed, and justly too, that no being can be guilty of violating a law, who has *no* knowledge of that law; but I am surprised that Mr. H. should assert that the heathen have *no knowledge of the law!* I am the more surprised at this, as, (notwithstanding the mutilated manner in which he has quoted Rom. ii. 14, 15) he had the whole passage full before him. To justify his assertion, that the heathen have no

knowledge of the law, he says, "And yet the Apostle tells us, that as many as have sinned without law, shall perish without law?"

To show the utter absurdity of the sense which Mr. H. would draw from this text, we only need to compare it with Rom. v. 13—"But sin is not imputed where there is *no law*." Now can a man sin without *any law*? and if not, did not the Apostle, in the former text, mean that they who sinned without the *written law*, should perish without *that law*? The Apostle, it would seem, was aware that an advantage might be taken by some, of the above expressions, (they who have sinned without law shall perish without law) and therefore throws in the 13th, 14th, and 15th verses, to show that the Gentiles are not totally destitute of a law. Again, to show that my assertion is just, that Mr. H. has quoted these passages in a mutilated manner, I shall just transcribe them from his book, as he has quoted them, and then as they stand in the Bible. His words are these—"He also observes," (that is the Apostle) "that 'When the Gentiles, which have not the law, are a law unto themselves; which show the work of the law written on their hearts.'—It seems to be distinctly conveyed by this passage, that in some sense, the law is written upon the hearts of all men by nature." The following is as it stands in the Bible—"For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves; Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another."

It would seem that to avoid the strength of this passage, Mr. H. with Mr. Scott, attempts so to explain it, as to make it appear, that the work of the Holy Spirit, on the hearts of all men, is a "natural sense of right and wrong." But it

does not require a very great degree of penetration to discover, that a sense of right and wrong is a flower that does not grow in *nature's* garden.—Especially, since “the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to *all men*, Teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.”

I submit the following explanation of Rom. ii. 14, 15, for the consideration of the reader.—For when the Gentiles which have not the *written* law, do by the light of the Spirit on their hearts, the things contained in the *written* law, these not being blest with the *written* law, are a law unto themselves; which show the work of the law *written* in their hearts by the Spirit—their conscience also by the same light accusing or else excusing one another, according to the tenor of their moral conduct. If this be a just sense of the text, then the meaning of the Apostle in the 12th verse is, that every man, whether Jew or Gentile, shall be judged according to the light of the dispensation under which he lives.—See the 9th and 10th verses.

The reader can now judge whether the assertion of Mr. H. that “the heathen have *no knowledge* of the law,” is to be relied on as true.

Again, he remarks—“The most plausible objection which we recollect to have seen to this view of the subject, is, its supposed inconsistency with the doctrine of total depravity.” Well, what has this to do with proving “that infants are actual sinners as soon as they are born?” What if adults do have a sense of right and wrong,—does this prove that infants have, as soon as they are born?—Surely not.

In the next place, Mr. H. labours to show that the “impressions of right and wrong on the minds of children,” is not altogether according to their education; but that it also have a natural sense of right and wrong. But it is

and an *actual sinner*, as a wild ass's colt, and no more.—When, therefore, Mr H. can prove that a *wild ass's colt* is an actual sinner, we shall begin to think it *may be* that infants are, but not before. The ass is principally noted for its stupidity and untractableness, and therefore is a fit emblem of that state of ignorance and stupidity in which man is born into the world. Mr. Benson observes on this text, "*For, or, yet, vain man would be wise.*—Man, who, since the fall, is void of all true wisdom, pretends to be wise, and able to pass a censure upon all God's ways and works.—*Born like a wild ass's colt*—ignorant, and dull, and stupid, as to divine things, and yet heady and untractable. Such is man by his birth; this evil is now natural, and hereditary, and therefore common to all men."

Upon the whole, it is presumed that every person must see, that the arguments of Mr. H. in this question, are all fruitless attempts to establish a favorite scheme. And had he succeeded in his attempt, it would have been easy for him to have established the doctrine of *infant damnation*!

But unfortunately for his system, and fortunately for the infant race, he has failed in his attempt. And not a person have we heard speak of this part of his book, but in terms of disapprobation. The sentiments which Mr. H. advocates in the seventh section of his work, is not, as one might hope, peculiar to himself. A number of gentlemen, some of them men of science, by recommending the book, have publicly adopted it as containing their own faith.—It is, then, not the faith of one individual only, but of many of the ministers, at least of that order, *that infants are actual sinners as soon as they are born*!!

## CHAPTER V.

### *On the Atonement.*

THE eighth section contains the views of Mr. H. on the *atonement* : and, I am happy to say, that the greater part of that section, in my judgment, contains sound doctrine.— There are a few things, however, which are deemed exceptionable ; upon these we shall make a few remarks. Upon p. 109, we have the following question—“ How extensive is the atonement ? ” The answer which Mr. H. gives to this question is, in itself, a truly good one ; but connected with other parts of his system, it seems to involve some serious contradictions. He observes,—“ Upon the same principles which rendered it just for God to pardon *one* sinner, might any number be pardoned. The atonement, therefore, knows nothing about limits : it is a provision as extensive as the wants of our world.” To these declarations he has added a number of texts, to prove that the atonement was designed for the benefit of all mankind ; and finally states that “ the offers of salvation being free, and indiscriminate, is another proof, that the atonement is unlimited.” p. 110.

These statements are full and emphatical, and well exhibit the universality of the atonement ; but whether this sentiment is reconcilable with the system of Calvinism in general, is a question. It is taken for granted that Mr. H. believes, that God, from eternity, unalterably decreed the damnation of a part of the human race. His arguments in the *fifth* section, abundantly show that this is his sentiment. Did God, then, make an atonement for the sins of those whom he had unalterably determined to cast off ? That

Christ is "the propitiation for the *sins of the whole world*," is established beyond the possibility of successful contradiction. But how this sacred truth can be reconciled with the doctrine of our opponents, is what we have not yet seen.

Again, he says,—“A door was open, or a foundation was laid, which had no reference to numbers.” But the Apostle tells us that “Christ died for *all*,”—and that he “gave himself a ransom for *all*.” Pray does not the term *all* in these passages have reference to numbers? Surely it has. But did the Almighty “open the door, and lay the foundation” for the salvation of these whom he, from eternity, had excluded from the possibility of salvation! Surely there is an absurdity in supposing this. But farther, for what purpose was the door opened to those whom God had determined should never come in? Was it that they *might* come in? Or, to justify their condemnation? And could the opening of the door answer either of these ends, on supposition that God had utterly excluded them by his irrevocable decrees? Surely not. It is not in the art of man to justify an universal atonement, and an indiscriminate offer of life to all, while it is allowed that a great part were reprobated from eternity. Neither *can* that part so reprobated ever come in, though a thousand doors of mercy were opened. But if the door was opened for all to come in and be saved, then the notion that a part were excluded by predestination is without foundation. Again, he says,—“Are we not told in that parable in which the atonement is compared to a supper, that some to whom the invitation is given, shall not taste of it?” p. 110. We are; but was the reason of their rejection found in an eternal decree of reprobation, or their slighting the invitation with contempt? Now to suppose that he did not intend that they should taste of his supper, when he sent them the invitation, is to represent the God of goodness as using duplicity!

But how does Mr. H. reconcile St. Paul and St. James, in their views of the grounds of justification? In general his method is good; but what does he mean by the following words?—"Now the faith, which according to Paul, was counted to Abraham for righteousness, was what James denominates good works." p. 112.

By representing the faith of which Paul speaks, and the works of which James speaks, to be one and the same thing, Mr. H. has confounded faith and works together. Whereas, one is the cause, the other the effect.

Again, the faith of which Paul speaks, and that which James says he would "*show by his works*," are one and the same thing without doubt. And of course the works for which James contends, are the evidences and fruits of that faith for which both contend. Doubtless one reason why Paul insisted so strongly on faith as the condition of justification was, that the people to whom he wrote, were predisposed to trust in their own works, without evangelical faith. And one reason why James insisted on those works which are the evidences and fruits of faith so strongly was, that the people to whom he wrote were in danger of falling into that error which of late is denominated Antinomianism—the making void the law through faith. Neither of the Apostles however confound faith and works together. A clear distinction is constantly kept up through all their writings.

Again, speaking of the imputed righteousness of Christ, Mr. H. seems to carry the idea that believers are not righteous, but only "*treated as though they were righteous*." That they are righteous before they are born again of the Spirit, no one contends; but that they are righteous after that work is accomplished, is proved by the whole tenor of God's word. Hence an Apostle says, "Let no man de-

ceive you ; he that doeth righteousness *is righteous* even as he is righteous." 1 John, iii. 7.

We readily agree with Mr. H. that in the pardon and justification of the sinner, there is no imputation of Christ's personal righteousness ; and if this is what he means by "transfer of character," we have no objection to the sentiment, but to the phraseology. If there is no impartation of character to the sinner, at the hour of justification, he remains the same he was before : he is the same sinner still.—But an Apostle tells us that "Exceeding great and precious promises are given unto us, that by these we might be *partakers of the divine nature*." Moreover, that they who are born of the Spirit, are made righteous, and have a new character, is obvious from the Apostle's words, Rom. vi. 22.—"Being made *free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness*," &c. That there is no imputation of Christ's personal righteousness in justification, is obvious from the following considerations :—1. The robes in which the saints are represented as standing before the throne, are said to be *their* righteousness.—2. It would argue that Christ's righteousness needs washing ; and in his own blood too.

Finally, it is a doubt whether the system of our opponents, does not in a great measure do away the necessity of an atonement. In the first place they tell us that man has no other depravity but what consists in voluntary and actual sin ; and in the second place, that we have power *by nature* to comply with the terms of life ; and of course to be saved without grace ! What is this but salvation by the merit of works ? And what need is there then of an atonement ? The pernicious leaven of Unitarianism, has already spread to an alarming degree, in many parts of the New-England States ; and it is to be feared that its progress is not wholly



rested yet. The Christian public have need to be on their guard. Error generally introduces itself by slow and imperceptible degrees; and as at *first* is mixed with some truth: and hence it is the more dangerous.

As we have had but very little to say upon the subject of the *atonement* in this chapter, I shall here take the liberty to make an extract from Dr. A. Clark's Commentary upon this important and interesting subject.—It is found in his closing remarks on the fourth chapter of Romans.

“From a careful examination of the divine oracles, it appears that the *death of Christ* was an *atonement* or *expiation* for the sin of the world: *For him hath God set forth to be a PROPITIATION through FAITH in HIS BLOOD*, chap. iii. 15. *For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ DIED for the UNGODLY*, chap. v. 6. *And when we were ENEMIES we were RECONCILED to God by the DEATH of his Son*, ver. 10. *In whom we have REDEMPTION THROUGH HIS BLOOD the FORGIVENESS of sins*, Eph. i. 7. *Christ hath loved us, and GIVEN HIMSELF FOR US an OFFERING and a SACRIFICE to God for a sweet-smelling savour*, *ibid* chap. i. 2. *In whom we have REDEMPTION THROUGH HIS BLOOD, the FORGIVENESS of sins*, Col. i. 14. *And having made PEACE THROUGH the BLOOD of his CROSS, in the BODY of his FLESH through DEATH*, *ib*, ver. 20, 22, *Who GAVE HIMSELF a RANSOM FOR ALL*, 1 Tim. ii. 6. *Who GAVE HIMSELF FOR US, that he might REDEEM us from all iniquity*, Tit. ii. 14. *By which will we are sanctified through the OFFERING of the BODY of Jesus Christ*, Heb. x. 14. *So Christ was once OFFERED TO BEAR THE SINS of many*, Heb. x. 28. See also Eph. ii. 13, 16.—1 Pet. i. 18, 19.—Rev. i. 9. But it would be transcribing a considerable part of the New Testament, to set down all the texts that refer to his most important and glorious truth.”

From these Scriptures, and from the general tenor of God's word, we learn the following particulars with regard to the atonement :—1. As to its nature, it is a sacrifice offered, and a ransom paid down for a satisfaction to divine justice for the sins of the whole world, both original and actual.—2. As to its design, it is—1st, An expression of God's *justice*, and *hatred* of sin in requiring the death of the criminal, or, the death of an *immaculate sacrifice*.—2d. An expression of his benevolence and mercy to a fallen and perishing world.—3. To render it just for him to pardon every soul on such *conditions* as he should see fit to establish.—4. To purchase for, and bestow upon us, the gift of the Holy Spirit—a day and means of grace—free agency, (which was lost by the fall) and eternal life, on the condition of holding the beginning of our confidence firm *unto the end*.—3. The medium through which we are to receive the benefits of the atonement, is *faith*. “For him hath God set forth to be a *propitiation* THROUGH *faith*.” Rom. iii. 25. Without this, all that Christ has done for us will not be availing; but, as *faith* makes him over to us as an atoning sacrifice, so *unbelief* makes him over to us as a Saviour of death unto death.



## CHAPTER VI.

### *On Regeneration.*

THE ninth section of the work before us, contains the views of our author upon this subject. And while we acknowledge with pleasure, that there are many good things in this section, we are under the necessity of saying, that we deem some things contained in this section, to be highly inconsistent, contradictory, and absurd.

Under the question whether in regeneration the subject is "active or passive," we have the following words:—"If in regeneration something is done which in every sense is beyond the power of man, on what principle can they be condemned for not being born again?" p. 115, 116. It is truly surprising that Mr. H. after having acknowledged that regeneration is effected by the power of the Holy Spirit, should insinuate that nothing is done in regeneration "*beyond the power of man,*" That repentance and faith are required as *conditions* of regeneration, is abundantly established from the word of God; and in this sense we may be co-workers with God; yet repentance and faith are no part of regeneration; which is peculiarly the work of the Holy Spirit. "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." "He that believeth shall be saved." See also John i. 13. There was doubtless a reason for Mr. H. wishing to carry the idea that in regeneration, nothing is done beyond the power of man; for he holds, it would seem, that we have *natural ability* sufficient to be saved, and of course to regenerate ourselves. I know not what other construction can be drawn from his remarks which we have under consideration. But if regeneration be the work of God alone, "on what principle can the sinner be condemned for not being born again?" I answer,—He is condemned for not complying with the conditions of salvation, while the grace of God that bringeth salvation, teaches him, and draws him towards the path of obedience. Yet, as we observed before, the compliance of the sinner with the terms, is by no means the work of regeneration.

The next error into which Mr. H. has fallen, is, a misapplication of Scripture. He says, "Are not all Christians constrained to acknowledge, that they were 'willing in the day of his power?'" p. 116. By the manner in which he

has introduced the above text from the hundred and tenth Psalm, it is obvious that he meant to refer it to the time of the sinner's conversion. But that it has no reference to that, is clear from the following consideration :—The words read with the connexion, speak no such language.—“*Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.*” Now sinners are not the people of God in the sense of the Psalmist.

The next thing which is deemed erroneous, is found under the question, whether the work of regeneration is “entire, or partial.” To this question he answers, that “so far as the question refers to the subject, it is partial.” Now it would seem that our author has fallen into the same mistake here, as in a former part of his work, viz. the setting up general experience as a criterion of truth ; whereas the generality of professors live so far beneath what is their duty and privilege, that they scarcely deserve the name. They are therefore no rule by which to judge of the extent of that experience offered to us in the word of God. It is true that justification does not entirely cleanse the heart from all the remains of the fallen nature ; yet the cleansing power of sanctifying grace is abundantly able to “to cleanse us from *all filthiness of flesh and spirit,*” and to enable us to “*perfect holiness in the fear of God.*” Yes, it is our exalted privilege to receive the full “washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.” For this purpose the Lord made that precious promise by the mouth of the prophet—“I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and from *all* your filthiness, and from *all* your idols *will I cleanse you.*” The word of God abounds with these exceeding great and precious promises, that thereby we may be partakers of the divine nature. But the Christian described by Mr. H. appears to be a motly mixture of good and evil. He does not speak merely of the justified person, but of those of the highest attainments in

grace. The reader, however, shall have his description in his own language.—It is as follows :—“ The regenerated man is unlike every other being. He is really sinful and really holy.” p. 117. It should here be remarked that Mr. H. does not allow that man possesses any other depravity than what consists in the “ *voluntary* act of the soul,”—i. e. the wilful transgression of a known law. Of course he does not mean here by “ really sinful,” the stains of original sin ; but that the sanctified, or *really holy* person, is knowingly and wilfully wicked ! Every one who takes the pains to examine his views of “ total *moral* depravity,” will see that this is a just representation of his sentiment on this subject. But we have no surer guide in the decision of this question than the word of God. To this let us have recourse. Our Lord tells us, we “ cannot serve God and mammon ;” but if the true Christian, is really sinful, according to Mr. H’s views of depravity, I see not why he cannot serve both. He is really sinful ; by this he can serve mammon.—He is really holy ; by this he can serve God ! I leave the reader to judge whether the views of our Lord, or those of Mr. H. are to be relied on as true. Again, I would ask in the language of the Apostle, “ What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness ?” “ And what communion hath light with darkness ?” “ And what concord hath Christ with Belial ?” or “ What part hath he that believeth with an infidel ?” “ And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols ? for ye are the temple of God,” &c. 2 Cor. vi. 14, 15, 16. The same apostle tells us, that “ If any man be in Christ, he is a *new creature* ; old things are *passed away* ; behold *all things* are become *new*.” How Mr. H’s compound Christian can consist with these texts is difficult to see. Here *all things* are become new ; of course the character here described is not *now* “ really sinful.” “ But now, be-

ing made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." Here it seems, is a character really holy, and made *free from sin*; and we shall leave it for our opponents to show, that the same character at the same time, is really sinful. The following passages are full to the same point.—"Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not." "But he that is begotten of God, keepeth himself, and that wicked one *toucheth him not*." Here again is the really holy part; but I see nothing of the really sinful! Indeed, if this sentiment of Mr. H. be true, it is important both to the kingdom of God, and that of the devil; for both have an important interest in the real Christian! How will Mr. H. avoid the following absurdity?—They who are "really holy" are the children of God;—they who are "really sinful" are the children of the devil. Both these qualities he contends, exist in the same person at the same time; of course they are the children of God, and the children of the devil at the same time!! This divinity brings to mind some lines in an old book entitled "The Gospel Sonnets."—

"As all amphibious creatures do,  
I live in land and water too;  
To *good* and *evil* equal bent,  
I'm both a *devil* and a *saint*."

But our author attempts to establish his doctrine, that the genuine Christian is really sinful and really holy, from the seventh chapter of Romans. But a comparison of the seventh with the eighth chapter, is sufficient to show any candid person that the character described in the seventh, is in a very different state from the one described in the eighth. That the reader may have a just view of the seventh of Romans, and thus discover whether it describes the real Christian, or the sinner slain by the law, I beg his indulgence to

extract the concluding remarks of Dr. Clarke upon this chapter. Referring to the last verse, the Doctor observes—

1. “The strong expressions in this clause have led many to conclude, that the Apostle himself, in his regenerated state, is indisputably the person intended. That all that is said in this chapter, of the *carnal man, sold under sin*, did apply to Saul of Tarsus, no man can doubt: and that what is here said can ever be with propriety applied to Paul the Apostle, who can believe? Of the former, all is natural; of the latter, all here said would be monstrous and absurd if not blasphemous.

2. “But it is supposed the words must be understood as implying a regenerate man, because the Apostle says, ver. 22, *I delight in the law of God*; and in this verse, *I myself, with the mind, serve the law of God*. These things, say the objectors, cannot be spoken of a wicked Jew, but of a regenerate man, such as the Apostle then was. But when we find that the former verse speaks of a man who is *brought into captivity to the law of sin and death*; surely there is no part of the regenerate state of the Apostle, to which the words can possibly apply. Had he been in captivity to the law of sin and death, after his conversion to christianity, what did he gain by that conversion? Nothing for his personal holiness. He had found no salvation under an inefficient law; and he was left in thralldom under an equally inefficient gospel. The very genius of christianity demonstrates that nothing like this can, with any propriety, be spoken of a genuine Christian.

3. “But, it is farther supposed, that these things cannot be spoken of a proud or wicked Jew; yet we learn the contrary from the infallible testimony of the word of God. Of this people, in their fallen and iniquitous state, God says by his prophet, ‘*They seek me daily, and delight to know my*

*ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinances of their God; they ask of me the ordinances of justice, and take delight in approaching to God.*—Isa. lviii. 2. Can any thing be stronger than this? And yet, at that time they were most dreadfully carnal, and sold under sin, as the rest of the chapter proves. It is a most notorious fact, that how little soever the life of a Jew was conformed to the law of his God, he notwithstanding possessed the highest esteem for it, and gloried in it; and the Apostle says nothing stronger of them in this chapter, than their conduct and profession verify to the present day. They are still *delighting in the law of God, after the inward man, with their mind serving the law of God; asking for the ordinances of justice, seeking God daily, and taking delight in approaching to God*: They even glory, and greatly exult and glory, in the divine original and excellency of their law; and all this while they are most abominably carnal, sold unto sin, and brought into the most degrading captivity, to the law of sin and death. If then, all that the Apostle states of the person in question be true of the Jews, through the whole period of their history, even to the present time:—If they do in all their professions, and their religious services, which they zealously maintain, confess, and conscientiously too, that *the law is holy, and the commandment holy, just, and good*; and yet, with their flesh, serve the law of sin; the same certainly may be said with equal propriety of a Jewish penitent, deeply convinced of his lost estate, and the total insufficiency of his legal observances to deliver him from his *body of sin and death*. And consequently, all this may be said of Paul the Jew, while *going about to establish his own righteousness*, his own plan of justification; he had not as yet *submitted to the righteousness of God*, the divine plan of redemption by Jesus Christ.



4. "It must be allowed, that whatever was the experience of so eminent a man, Christian, and Apostle, as St. Paul, it must be a very proper standard of Christianity. And if we are to take what is here said, as his experience as a Christian, it would be presumption in us to expect to go higher ; for, he certainly had pushed the principles of his religion to their utmost consequences. But his whole life, and the account which he immediately gives of himself in the succeeding chapter prove, that he, as a Christian and an Apostle, had a widely different experience ; an experience which amply justifies that superiority, which he attributes to the Christian religion over the Jewish ; and demonstrates that it not only is well calculated to perfect all preceding dispensations, but that it affords *salvation to the uttermost*, to all those who flee for refuge to the hope that it sets before them. Besides, there is nothing spoken here of the state of a conscientious Jew, or of St. Paul in his Jewish state, that is not true of every genuine penitent ; even before, and it may be, long before, he has believed in Christ, to the saving of his soul. The assertion, that "every Christian, however advanced in the divine life, will and must feel all this inward conflict," &c. is as untrue as it is dangerous. That many called Christians, and probably sincere, do feel all this, may be readily granted ; and such we must consider to be in the same state as Saul of Tarsus, previously to his conversion ; but that they must continue thus, is no where intimated in the gospel of Christ. We must take heed how we make our experience, which is the result of our unbelief and unfaithfulness, the standard of the people of God ; and lower down christianity to our most reprehensible and dwarfish state : at the same time we should not be discouraged at what we thus feel, but apply to God, through Christ, as Paul did ; and then we shall soon be able, with him, to declare to the eternal

glory of God's grace, that *the law of the spirit of life, in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death.* This is the inheritance of God's children ; and their salvation is of me saith the Lord. Reader, do not plead for Baal ;—try, fully try, the efficacy of the blood of the covenant ; and be not content with less salvation than God has provided for thee. Thou art not straightened in God, be not straightened in thy own bowels."

With this sentiment agree Macknight, Benson, and other learned divines. But let us return to Mr. H's description of the regenerate man. His argument drawn from the imperfections of the disciples of Christ, only proves that my assertion is just—that he sets up the defective experience of Christians as a standard of gospel holiness.

He next attempts to prove, that the genuine Christian "is really sinful and really holy" at the same time, from the words of Job.—"*If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: If I say I am perfect, it shall prove me perverse.*" p. 117. To show the fallacy of the conclusion which Mr. H. draws from this passage, we only need to ask, which was the most likely to give the true character of Job ; he, while borne down under affliction, and a sense of his unworthiness, or the great Jehovah, whose word is verity and truth ; and who is not exposed in the least to undervalue any of the works of his hands ? It is certain that God declared Job to be "*a perfect man.*" Job i. 8 : and as he had testimony to the fact from the searcher of hearts, it was both unnecessary and improper for him to bear the same testimony to himself. We shall not then hesitate to believe, that God told the truth, when he said Job was perfect, notwithstanding Job through modesty refused to say it to himself. And if he afterwards so far went astray as to speak unadvisedly with his lips, this is no argument that he was not perfect a

the time when Jehovah declared he was. No argument then from the case of Job, to prove that the regenerate man is "really sinful and really holy."

Another effort of our author to establish his assertion, is the following:—"Christians in the Scriptures are sometimes called perfect, when nothing more is to be understood by it, than that their characters, so far as they are seen by men, are regular and upright." p. 118; and then to prove his assertion quotes James iii. 2.—"For in many things we offend all.—If any man offend not *in word*, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body." The ground of our author's mistake in the application of this text, arises from supposing, that the persons who *offend all*, are the same who are *perfect*, and able to bridle the whole body.—But if we consult the first verse, we shall find, that the persons who offend all, are those ambitious spirits who desire to *be many masters*; and who shall receive the greater *condemnation*; whereas, the one described as being *perfect*, not only does not offend *in word*, but is *able also to bridle or govern the whole man*! I conclude therefore, that the character here denominated *perfect*, does not merely appear "regular and upright in the sight of men," but is really perfect *in word*, and has the government of all the passions, appetites and desires;—yea, is able to bridle the *whole body*.

Again, Mr. H. supposes with the most of Christians, that regeneration is invariably preceded by conviction, in a greater or less degree. And yet he asserts that the conversion of Paul was so sudden, that "It is as difficult to see how his could be preceded by conviction, or a work of the law, as any that can be named." p. 120 and 121. But surely one would think that *three days* (Acts ix. 9.) were sufficient for the conviction of a sinner, even as great as Saul of Tarsus! That he did not experience a change of heart or regeneration

till after three days, is evident—1. From the address of Ananias to him,—“And now, why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and *wash away thy sins*, calling on the name of the Lord.” Acts xxii. 16.—2. The scales, which are emblems of our spiritual blindness, did not fall from his eyes, until three days after his conviction. Indeed I have read of many far more sudden conversions than that of Saul of Tarsus. His *conviction* was no doubt sudden and powerful. But what is surprising in the statements of Mr. H. is, that, on p. 117, he adduces the seventh of Romans as descriptive of the “warfare” of the regenerate man; and on p. 121, adduces the same chapter, (verse 9) as descriptive of that *conviction which precedes regeneration!* Of course he must here acknowledge, either that he has contradicted his own sentiment, and that of his order in general, in relation to the seventh of Romans, or that some parts at least, of that chapter, describes the state of a soul under conviction. We believe however, that the whole of it is designed to exhibit the state of a soul under the exercise of conviction; and that the eighth is designed to exhibit the state of the regenerate man.

The next thing which we have occasion to remark upon, is found under the question whether “the subject of regeneration is sensible of the time when it is effected.” To this question he gives the following answer:—“There are doubtless some cases in which the impressions are so powerful as to authorize a probable conjecture in regard to the particular time,” &c.

The utmost satisfaction then, which we can have as to the time of our espousals to Christ, according to Mr. H., is a “probable conjecture!” What wonder, if the watchmen talk in this way, that the inhabitants of the city should be always doubting and fearing; and never able to say any thing

more than that they *hope* they have a *hope*? That there is danger of being deceived as to our spiritual state, there can be no doubt in the mind of any who understand any thing of the subtlety of satan, or the deceitfulness of the human heart; yet, it is a doubt on which side the greatest danger lies—whether in thinking we are born again, from an inward impression, when we are not; or, in thinking we are, merely because our outward conduct in some degree corresponds with the word of God, when we are not. Without doubt there are many who from the corruptest motives perform in a heartless manner the externals of religion; and no doubt but thousands are now deceiving themselves with the idea that outward morality is the sum total of all true religion.—But the question is, whether we have any assurance from the word of God, that we may know the time when we are brought into the liberty of the gospel. That many who cannot tell the precise moment, give good evidence that they are not deceived, is doubtless true; and it is also true, that thousands of those who can testify of the exact time, give equal evidence of a sound conversion to God. The work of regeneration is represented in Scripture, by opening the eyes of one who was born blind. Now would it be possible for a man's eyes to be suddenly opened on the light of day, and he know nothing more than a “probable *conjecture*” as to the time when it was done? Would it be possible to persuade such a man to *hope* his eyes were opened, while he had demonstrative evidence of the fact from every object around him? No, his language would be, “One thing I *know*, that whereas I was blind, I now see.” Regeneration is represented by being brought out of darkness into light. Can this be done without knowing something of the time? It is set forth by the healing of the most inveterate and painful diseases: does not this imply a knowledge of the time when the pain

ceased, and the cure was effected? And who will say, that the more sensible part of man, is incapable of discovering the time of its transition from nature to grace—from sin to holiness—from *satan* to God?

Again, an Apostle tells us that “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.” Pray can love to God and his people take the place of hatred, and the subject know nothing of the *time* when he began to love the brethren?—Is that great change so slight a thing?—Surely it is not. These however are but a few out of the many instances from which the same point is undeniably established; and to these Scripture proofs, may be added the testimonies of thousands of living witnesses, both in Europe and America, whose lives furnish the most incontestible evidence of the soundness of their experience. But Mr. H. attempts to *prove* that we can know nothing beyond a “probable conjecture,” in regard to the time of the change of our hearts. He observes, “The Scriptures have given us other criterions, by which we are to determine, whether we have been the subjects of this change.” p. 123. True: but does this prove, that God has not “given unto us his Holy Spirit,” by which we may know the time when we were first enabled to cry “Abba Father?” This only proves, that we have more testimonies still of the fact for which we contend. But says he, “We are to be known by the fruits we yield.” Very well; was there not a time when we *began* to yield fruit?—And may not that time be known?—Surely it may. He goes on—“And to determine whether we bear the fruits of righteousness, we are directed to examine and prove ourselves.” Here it seems Mr. H. refers to 2 Cor. xiii. 5; but what are the objects of examination *there* stated? Whether we “yield fruit,” or whether we be *in the faith*; and whether *Jesus Christ is in us*? But suppose we are directed to examine

whether we bear fruit, does this prove that we may not know the time when we were converted to God?—Certainly not.

Once more he says—"All such directions would be useless, if we could invariably fix upon the time when our hearts were regenerated." I answer;—This part of the argument would have some weight, provided all who are regenerated are unalterably sure of everlasting life.—Then to be sure, if they but once ascertain, either by an inward impression by the Spirit of God on the heart, or by the fruit they bear, that they are the subjects of this change, all is well. But believing as we do, that there is a dangerous possibility of losing our first love, and of becoming lukewarm, and of casting away our confidence, and of making shipwreck of our faith, &c. we think it highly important for those who can tell the very day when they began to *stand*, to "examine and prove themselves," whether they are now what they once were, *lest they fall after the same example of unbelief, and so be rejected from entering into his rest.* I see no argument here then against the direct witness of the Spirit in our conversion.

The substance of the other argument by which Mr. H. would prove that the time of our regeneration cannot be known beyond a "probable conjecture," is this:—"Many who have professed to have a certain knowledge of the time of their conversion, have apostatized, and have given the most undeniable evidence, that they were deceived." p. 128. I answer: And so have many who have professed to have been converted without knowing the exact time; so that this proves nothing against the one sentiment more than against the other. Neither have we any doubt but many who have apostatized, were *not* deceived as to the first work; but they have since "given the most undeniable evidence," that even *after we have escaped the pollutions of the world through*

*the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we may be again entangled therein and overcome ; and so, the last state be worse with us than the first.*

They who have the witness of God's spirit with theirs that they are the children of God, have decidedly the advantage of those who are always doubting of their acceptance. But it may be asked whether there is not a danger of being deceived ? I answer, if we remain in the region of doubt there is—but if we have the testimony of God's spirit with ours that we have passed from death unto life, and have a corresponding life and conversation, there is not ; for God never bears a false testimony to the heart of any man.

The "evidences of regeneration," adduced by Mr. H. I consider to be very good ; and have the same opinion of his views of all its "effects," except one, viz :—repentance.—This, instead of being an effect or fruit of regeneration, is a preparatory work for that great change. This is the order in which the scriptures place it—"repent and be converted." Repentance also precedes saving faith ; hence it was said to some of the wicked Jews, "and ye, when ye had seen it, *repented not afterwards that ye might believe.*" Again—to suppose that repentance *follows* regeneration, would prove more than Mr. H. himself, would be willing to allow ; for he does not believe that a regenerate person can ever perish ; and yet the scriptures assert, that "except we repent we shall *all* likewise perish." Now if when a person is regenerated, he has yet to repent of his past sins, *which have been forgiven*, how is it possible for Mr. H. to avoid the conclusion, that except *regenerated persons repent of sins already forgiven*, they shall perish ! If it be said that it is true, but they will repent because they are regenerated ; I answer then, danger is represented where there is none ; and to say to persons who will *unavoidably* repent, "*Except ye repent*



*ye shall perish,*" would be to talk without sense. But Mr. H. has brought two texts to prove that repentance is an effect of regeneration. 'If God, peradventure, will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.' 2d Tim. ii, 25.—'Then hath God also to the Gentiles, granted repentance unto life.'—Acts, xi, 18. Now, in order for these passages to prove that repentance is an effect or fruit of regeneration, they should speak of persons who were regenerated *previous* to repentance being given to them. Neither of the passages, however, speak any such language. In the first, the particle *them*, refers to "*those who oppose themselves, and are taken captive by the devil at his will.*" The second by no means proves, that God had to *regenerated persons* granted repentance unto life, but the Gentile world who lay in wickedness, and were without God and without hope in the world. No proof from these texts then, that repentance is an effect of regeneration. It is presumed that Mr. H. will not contend, that our sins are not forgiven the moment we are regenerated ; yet, we read that Christ was "exalted to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." Here, as throughout the scriptures, repentance is set before the forgiveness of sins.

The other fruits of regeneration which Mr. H. has mentioned, he has readily proved ; but the want of all proof on the above point, is a strong evidence against it.

In addition to the evidence already adduced to show that repentance goes before, and is a condition of regeneration, we may refer the reader to thousands of living witnesses who can testify, that through the influence of the Holy Spirit, they were brought to repentance before they were regenerated or born a-new. From the general character of his remarks, on this subject, I am led to think that Mr. H. has mistaken the work of conviction for that of conversion or

regeneration. I apprehend, also, that the sentiment, (that repentance is an effect of regeneration,) has been adopted rather from human reasoning than from the word of God.—The argument seems to be this :—No unregenerate man can do a good act. But repentance is a good act—therefore, no unregenerate man can repent. Now the first of the above propositions, it is believed will be found to be defective ; for although an unregenerate man, unassisted by the spirit of God, cannot do a good act, or think a good thought, yet by the assistance of that spirit, which “teaches all men the denying of ungodliness and worldly lusts,” we may repent and do works meet for repentance. Again, faith in Christ is an evangelical or good act, yet it is set forth as a condition of justification. It must then precede that justification of which it is a condition ; of course we may, *by the assistance of divine grace*, perform evangelical or good acts before regeneration. But it may be said that if this be so, we have whereof to glory. By no means, unless we could perform these acts by *natural ability*, without divine grace—then it would be true ; but as all is of grace, every mouth is stopped.

“My mouth as in the dust I hide,  
And glory give to God alone.”

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## CHAPTER VII.

### *On Natural Ability.*

SECTION tenth, of the Christian's Instructor, contains the remarks of Mr. H. upon this subject ; and it would seem that the absurd notion, that sinners have a *natural ability* to do what God requires, and at the same time a *moral in-*

*bility* which opposes the first, has been so often and so fully refuted, that our opponents feel unwilling to come out plainly and avow it. Hence, Mr. H. has not *professedly* discussed but one side of the question ; i. e. whether the sinner has power, by *nature*, to comply with the terms of life.—The circumlocution, also, which marks the investigation of this subject by our author, shows but too plainly, that he was sensible he had undertaken a most difficult task.—A task which few presume to undertake. Nevertheless the subject is of considerable importance, as the decision of it is in some measure to decide whether we are to be saved by the *grace of God*, or, by our own *natural ability*. If by the former, the merit of works is excluded, and with it all boasting ; but if by the latter, it will admit of a doubt whether we are to be saved *wholly* by grace. The first question under this head is as follows :—“ Has the sinner, by nature, power to comply with the terms of life.” p. 148. Mr. H. assumes the affirmative of this question, that sinners *have power, by nature*, to comply with the terms of salvation ; and after spending more than three pages on the phraseology of terms, attempts to prove the position which he takes.

Before we proceed to the examination of this subject, it is necessary to understand the meaning of the terms *natural ability*. Mr. H. acknowledges (as well he may, for there is no such thing,) that we have no ability or power independent of God. It seems then, that there are two kinds of power or ability, given to mankind. The one, is peculiarly and emphatically a *natural ability* ; for it is given in the order of nature. The other is peculiarly and emphatically a moral or *gracious ability* ; for it is given in the order of grace, and is a supernatural or divine influence of the Spirit of God on the heart. Titus ii, 11, 12. By natural ability I mean the understanding, will, conscience, memory, affec-

tions, desires, &c. with all the muscular powers of the body, such as speech, hearing, seeing, smelling, tasting, with the use we have of our hands and feet. These, we all agree, are *natural* abilities. Some of these we have in common with other animals ; some of them are peculiar to us as men. These we have, and exercise, in dependence on the goodness and mercy of God. The question, then, is not whether we have natural abilities, nor whether these abilities should be employed in the service of God, but whether, with these, and without the *supernatural* agency of the Holy Ghost, the sinner *can* comply with the terms of salvation.— If he can, (which Mr. H. contends,) I see not but salvation is of works. But if it be admitted that he cannot, then two important points are gained. 1. That salvation is wholly of grace. 2. That man with all his natural ability, cannot do what is required of him without the special influence of the Holy Spirit.

It will not be contended, it is presumed, that the influence of the divine spirit, by which the sinner is enabled to comply with offered mercy, is a natural ability. This all must allow, is of a gracious or moral character. But if that influence is not absolutely necessary, to enable the sinner to repent, the words of Christ cannot be understood. “*No man CAN come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him.*” Again, if we have ability, *by nature*, to comply with the terms of life, without grace, why has not some one ever done it ? It is presumed the man cannot be found who has obtained salvation, who will not acknowledge, that all the good he has obtained or done, was by the grace of God. But Mr. H. has brought forward a number of texts, which he supposes his opponents would produce as evidence of the real inability of the sinner ; but there is but one (the above text, John vi, 44,) out of the whole, which I should

have thought of producing as evidence of the point. All his arguments, therefore, drawn from these texts, are wide from the point of controversy. He found it, however, far more difficult to do away the force of the above text, than that of the others. He could easily show, that the others only proved a "determined unwillingness;" but a few assertions of his, will hardly prove, that the sinner *can come* to Christ without the drawings of the Father. He attempts however, to show, that the words "no man *can come*," &c. in the passage under consideration, is nearly or quite the same with, "ye *will not* come to me that ye might have life." But to any unprejudiced person, a comparison of the two places is abundantly sufficient to show, that *cannot*, and *will not*, are of widely different meanings, as used by our Saviour. If they *cannot come* without the drawings of the Father, they are certainly not to blame for not coming while they have not those drawings; but if it can be proved that they have those drawings, then from the whole, it is proved, 1. that the sinner has not natural ability sufficient to comply with the terms of life, without the influences of the Holy Spirit. 2. That all are favored with these gracious influences. 3. That if any refuse to come to Christ, it is because they *will not*, and of course are guilty.—Now here is the proof of this doctrine—"And I if I be lifted up from the earth, will *draw all men* unto me." "The grace of God that bringeth *salvation*, hath appeared to *all men*." The conclusion is unavoidable; the real inability of the sinner, without the drawings of the Father, is abundantly established, and his guilt, from rejecting the council of God against himself, and resisting the drawings of the Holy Ghost.—Another text to the same point is the following—"He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them *gave he power to become the sons*

of God." Here, it seems, they had no power to become the sons of God, until it was given them. But it may be said, that it was by *natural ability* that they received him. I answer, that needs proof. By whatever power they received him, it is certain they had no power to become the children of God, until it was given to them : and it is farther certain, that they received this power *after* they had, in some sense, received him. If, therefore, it was *natural ability* by which they became the sons of God, they had it not previous to their reception of him.

Again—the same point is abundantly established from Rom. v, 6, "For when we were yet *without strength* Christ died for the ungodly." No words can be more explicit than these. They prove beyond the possibility of contradiction, that mankind have no power to comply with the terms of salvation, but what is afforded through the death of Christ, and the gift of the Holy Spirit. When he undertook the glorious work of redemption, he found us '*without strength.*' No doctrine, then, is more expressly taught in the word of God, than that man is utterly helpless, in himself. Hence, the words of our Saviour—"Without me ye can do nothing." But let us examine the arguments by which Mr. H. would prove that the sinner has, *by nature*, all the ability which he needs, to comply with the terms of salvation. The first is as follows.—"That kind of inability under which sinners are said to labor, in the scriptures, is represented as their crime." p 152. And then, to prove his assertion, quotes a number of passages, which have no reference, whatever, to the *real* inability of man. I fully justify his explanation of those passages, but, unfortunately for him, they do not touch the point in question—for that inability which is represented as the crime of the sinner, is both avoidable and

wilful, but this is not the inability which is the subject of debate.

The substance of the second argument runs thus :—"The requirements of God, in their most perfect and extensive form, are limited to the ability of men." This proposition contains an important truth, but does not prove that the ability by which we are enabled to 'love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, might, mind and strength,' is a *natural* ability. So far from it, that this is impossible until the Lord writes his law in our hearts, and puts it in our minds by his holy Spirit. It is not contended that the sinner has *no* ability to do what God requires of him; but whether this ability is a natural, or a moral or gracious ability. The inference therefore which Mr. H. supposes his opponents would draw, viz. that we are required to love God with an ability which we do not possess, is not drawn by them, as they do not deny but that man possesses a moral or gracious ability to comply with the terms of salvation.

His third and fourth arguments are the same in substance, and will admit of the same answer; yet there is one remark in the fourth, worthy of notice: it is this :—"Can it be believed while we cherish proper feelings towards the Judge of all the earth, that he will command us to do that which is not within our power, and threaten us with everlasting punishment if we do not comply?" I answer, by no means.—But does not Mr. H. believe that the Judge of all the earth did from all eternity decree to damn a part of the human race? Does he not also believe, that the same God has commanded *all the ends of the earth* to look unto him and *be saved*?—and that he threatens them with everlasting punishment if they do not comply? What feelings then must our opponents cherish towards the Judge of all the earth?

Instead however of being condemned for not doing what

is not within their power, or for not complying with the terms of life by mere natural ability, "*This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*"

I am happy to state, that Mr. H. does not contend, that sinners are able by natural ability, to make an atonement! This he readily grants they cannot do. We shall therefore pass to consider the third & last question on this subject: it is this:—"If men have all the ability they need to comply with the divine commands, why are the influences of the Spirit necessary in order to their salvation?" p. 153 To this question he answers, "The agency of the Spirit is necessary to make them *willing*." But pray have they not natural ability to be *willing*? If not, the question is decided, men have not *by nature* power sufficient to comply with the terms of life. Again,

It is evident that no act whatever, which is of a moral character, can be performed without the consent of the will; but if the concurrence of the will is absolutely necessary for the performance of moral action, one of two things is certain.—1. That men have natural ability to be willing, or—2. They have not power by nature to comply with the terms of life. If the former be true, Mr. H. has not accounted for the influences of the Spirit being necessary; but he does acknowledge that those influences are necessary: of course we *cannot* be willing without them. From his own concession then we draw the unavoidable conclusion, that without the special influences of the holy Spirit we *cannot comply with the terms of salvation*.

From the question and answer of Mr. H. to it, it is evident that he does not mean by natural ability, the gracious help of the divine Spirit, with which sinners are favoured in order to their salvation. Yet his own concession, and espe-



cially the word of God, proves incontestibly the real inability and utter helplessness of the sinner in himself. This sentiment is well calculated to prostrate the pride of man as in the dust before the throne of divine mercy; whereas, if man possess natural strength sufficient, without the agency of the Spirit of God, to do what is required of him, he has whereof to glory, but not before God. On this principle, the utmost that the sinner will have to acknowledge, is his dependance on Christ for the atonement! But on the one for which we contend, he is bound to acknowledge not only the necessity of an atonement, but also the necessity of the special influences of the holy Spirit, in order to his salvation. Mr. H. acknowledges, to be sure, that "the agency of the Spirit is necessary" to salvation, (and in this acknowledges the real inability of the sinner) yet he contends that we have ability by *nature* to be saved. But it is presumed that he means nothing more nor less by the unwillingness of the sinner, than what some of his coadjutors mean by "*moral inability*."—Hence although as we before observed, he has not professedly discussed but one side of the question, yet it is evident from his answer to the last question, that he holds it in the same light. By this notion of our opponents, the human mind is represented like the beam of an even scale, with natural ability thrown into one side, and moral inability thrown into the other. The only difference in the weight is, that the moral *inability* is always a little the heaviest; which invariably makes the scale preponderate in favour of the moral inability. Now who that possesses a common share of intellect but must see the utter absurdity of supposing, that man under such circumstances, has natural ability to comply with the commands of God? What absurdity, to talk of *having ability* to do a thing, and an *inability* at the same time! But our opponents may say, that the moral inability under

which sinners labour is their *crime*. Their crime!—Pray do not the articles of “Addison Consociation” declare, that mankind “are *by* DIVINE constitution the subjects of total MORAL depravity !” Is it then their crime to be what God has constituted them ? Yes, according to Calvinism, God has designedly placed man in a state of total *moral* depravity, which invariably outweighs his natural ability, and then commands him to repent and be saved ; and threatens him with future and everlasting punishment if he does not comply ! How would a parent be viewed by the public, who should tie his child fast with cords which he could not break, and then command him under the penalty of severe correction, to run a race ? A friend to humanity expostulates with him—“Sir, why do you exercise such unreasonable authority over your child ?” But the tyrant answers, ‘O sir, you do not understand it ! for my child has all the natural ability which he ever had.—He has reason, understanding, will and memory, as good as ever ; and the strength of his body is firm and good.—And on this ground I intend to vindicate my justice in his punishment, if he does not comply.’ “But pray sir, untie him, and let him have a chance to run ; and then if he does not, his punishment will be just.” ‘No, but I tell you, he has natural ability ; and if he does not exercise it and obey, he shall be punished !’

This is but too true a picture of the system of our opponents ; yet it is matter of rejoicing, that such a God as is therein represented, no where *else exists* but in their creed. That God whose *tender mercies* are over all his works, and who is loving to *every man*, has taught us a very different system of theology.

Finally, in the language of a distinguished gentleman of this state, (Vermont) who is a Congregationalist, I would observe, that the notion of a natural ability, and moral inability

ity is without doubt the effect of human invention, and has no foundation in the truth.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### *On Election.*

As far as Mr. H. has kept to the *Scripture* account of this doctrine, it is very good ; for the Scriptures do teach the doctrine of election ; but a very different doctrine it is believed, from the one so called by our opponents.

This doctrine, as taught in the Bible, is every way calculated to exhibit the great love of God our Saviour to a fallen world. Not however by representing the Deity as an arbitrary and capricious being, who chooses without reason or condition, a part of mankind to be the subjects of his mercy, and reprobates all the rest to the interminable flames of hell, and for no other reason than because he would !—But by representing him as so loving the world as to send his only begotten Son into the world, that *whosoever* believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

The doctrine of election, as taught by Calvinist divines in general, is believed by comparatively few people ; and even many of the members of Calvinist churches hesitate to believe *their* views of this subject. And Mr. H. himself kindly acknowledges, that a “*formal assent* to his views of this subject, is not necessary to salvation.” This indeed it was necessary to do, or he must have renounced fellowship not only for thousands of Christians of other denominations, but for many of his own order. The caution with which he has treated this subject, rather indicates a desire to keep the offensive parts of the Calvinistic system out of sight. Hence

he is careful not to inform us whether he means an *unconditional* election, or whether we are chosen on the conditions of repentance, faith and obedience. His first statement of it is in these words:—"Some men were chosen in Christ, 'According to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience.'" The passage contained in this proposition proves—1. That God foreknew who would comply with the conditions of the gospel.—2. And when they do comply with those conditions, they are chosen exactly according to that foreknowledge.—3. That the means of this election in the hand of the Spirit, are sanctification unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. The moving cause of this election, is the real love wherewith he loved us, when he gave his Son to die, that all *might be saved* and come to the knowledge of the truth. The foundation being thus laid, and the way opened for the salvation of all, whoever complies with the divine requirements is elected, or adopted into the family of God. But that this election does not unalterably secure the final salvation of the elect, is evident; for they are commanded to "give diligence to *MAKE their calling and election* sure." Now if election were unconditional, and unalterably sure, the elect would not be called upon to make that sure which was never unsure. That the elect are called upon to make their election sure, is a strong evidence that it was not made so by an unalterable decree of election.

But the point ought here to be settled whether election is conditional or unconditional. Although Mr. H. has not attempted to discuss this point of the subject, yet it is certain, that as a body the Calvinists do not allow that election is conditional. Now it is conditional or it is not. If it is unconditional the following absurdities will unavoidably follow.—1. That God is a respecter of persons, and uses par-

tiality.—2. That he is insincere in offering life and salvation to the non-elect, with an assurance that all *may* come and be saved.—3. It would draw after it the horrible notion of unconditional reprobation of all the non-elect, which would be unjust in the highest degree.—4. It would destroy a state of trial or probation.—5. It would destroy the agency of man upon which his accountability rests; and of course do away the necessity of a day of judgment; and in fact, the whole system of christianity!

But, if election be conditional, none of these inconsistencies can justly be attributed to it. And that it is conditional, the following arguments tend to show.—1. We have already seen that the obedience of the elect is absolutely necessary in order to render their election sure; for the Apostle adds,—“For *if ye do* these things ye shall never fall:” which shows, that if they do them not, they shall fall.—2. We are said to be elected “*according to the foreknowledge of God.*” Now let our opponents explain in what sense election is according to the foreknowledge of God, if it is not according as he foresaw that we should comply with the conditions of the gospel. This sense of the passage is plain and easy, while every other is dark and inexplicable.—3. The salvation of all men is conditional; “Except ye repent ye shall *all perish.*” “He that believeth shall be saved.”—See also Rom. ii. 7—11. Now there can be no unconditional election while salvation is conditional.—4. All men are finally to be rewarded “*according to their works;*” and their compliance or non-compliance with the terms of salvation, is alleged as the cause or reason of their respective rewards.—See Matthew twenty-fifth chapter.—5. Unconditional election opens the door to Universalism; for if God can consistently save one soul unconditionally, on the same principle he can save any number; and if so, his goodness would certain-

ly prompt him to save all. But all are not saved; therefore election to salvation is conditional. This view of election, it is believed, is every way consistent; for—1. It does not draw after it the horrible notion of unconditional reprobation, which the Calvinistic doctrine of election does.—2. It fully clears the Almighty from the charge of *insincerity*, which the opposite doctrine does not.—3. It clears him from the charge of *partiality*, which, it is believed, the doctrine of our opponents does not. We are aware that they do not generally present but one side of their system to their hearers.—The doctrine of unconditional reprobation, is generally carefully kept out of sight;—hence it will be found, that many who hold to the doctrine of election very strenuously, do not hold to reprobation. Every consistent Calvinist however, holds both these notions together. It will scarcely answer the purpose of our opponents, to say that the non elect are reprobated *for their sins*; for if election be unconditional, so is reprobation. And if the “ground of God’s choice or election of some, is *no moral* difference in them, (see the Appendix) neither is the ground or reason of his reprobating all the rest, any moral difference in *them*. And if some were elected from all eternity, to be the heirs of life unconditionally, all the rest were from eternity unconditionally reprobated to be heirs of eternal death!

As evidence that his views of election are correct, Mr. H. has spent more than two pages in proving what no man in his senses could think of denying.—1. “That God is immutable;” and—2. “That he converts and saves sinners.” This is his argument.—“Whatever God does towards the salvation of sinners, he always meant to do.” p. 157. Very true: and he has done much for the salvation of *all men*.—He so loved all men, as to make it possible for all to come to Christ and be saved; and without doubt what he has done

in his boundless goodness towards the salvation of all men, "*he always* meant to do." And when he converts a sinner from the error of his way, he always meant to do it ; and, for this reason, that he always saw that the sinner would through the aid of the divine Spirit, comply with the terms of the gospel. Again, he intimates that God, in the accomplishment of his decree of election, uses "*various means.*" I would also ask, whether according to the doctrine of our opponents, God has not determined to *use various means*, in the accomplishment of his decree of reprobation ? If so, has he not determined that the reprobates *shall sin*, in order to bring about their damnation ? There is no wonder that John Calvin, when writing on this point, confessed that it was a "horrible decree."

As the arguments of Mr. H. in this subject, are very similar to the ones he used on the subject of decrees, the same arguments used in opposition to them, will generally apply here. We shall, therefore, hasten to the consideration of his scripture proofs. 'As many as were ordained to eternal life, believed.' Acts. xiii, 48. That this text makes nothing for the doctrine of unconditional election, will appear on a careful examination of it with the context ; and as the authority of the learned will ever weigh much with most people, I beg leave to insert an explanation of this passage, given by several of the most judicious commentators of different denominations. Speaking of this text Mr. Benson observes ;—"From this expression some infer, that God's ordination, or decree, is the sole or principal cause of men's faith, and that he hath thereby fixed the number of those that shall believe, and whom he will finally save. But if so, consequently the want, or absence, of such ordination, or decree, in behalf of others, is the sole or principal reason of their unbelief ; and by God's withholding it, he has fixed

the number of those that shall not believe, and so shall finally perish. For if the reason why these persons believed was only, or chiefly this, that they were ordained to believe, and obtain eternal life, then the reason why the rest believed not must be only, or chiefly this, that they were not so ordained by God. And, if so, what necessity could there be, that *the word of God should first be preached to them*—ver. 46. Was it only that their damnation might be greater? This seems to charge that lover of souls, whose *tender mercies are over all his works*, with the greatest cruelty; as it makes him determine, from all eternity, not only that so many souls, as capable of salvation as any others, shall perish everlastingly, but also that the dispensations of his providence shall be such towards them, as shall necessarily tend to the aggravation of their condemnation. And what could even their most malicious enemy do more? What is it that Satan himself aims at by all his temptations, but the aggravation of the future punishment of sinners? Therefore, to assert that God had determined his word should be spoken to these Jews, for this very end, (which assertion must follow from such an interpretation of the text,) is to make God more instrumental to their ruin than even the devil himself; and is certainly wholly irreconcilable with his declarations, that *he is not willing that any should perish, but would have all men to be saved*. Further, the Apostle gives this reason, why he turned from the Jews to the Gentiles, that the Jews had *thrust the word of God from them, and judged themselves unworthy of eternal life*.—ver. 46; whereas, according to this doctrine, this could be no sufficient reason for his turning from them to the Gentiles; for it was only they among the Jews whom God had not ordained to eternal life, who thus refused to believe, and obey the word of God. And as many among the Gentiles



as were not thus ordained must necessarily do the same ; and so there could be no sufficient reason why he should turn to the Gentiles on that account. Once more, ‘ If as *many as* (in that assembly,) *were ordained to eternal life*, believed, under that sermon of Paul, (where *almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God*,) it follows, that all who believed not *then* were eternally shut up in unbelief ; and that all the elect, believed at once—that they who do not believe at one time, shall not believe at another ; and that when Paul returned to Antioch, few souls, if any, could be converted by his ministry ; God having, at once, taken *as many as were ordained to eternal life*, and left all the rest to Satan.’—Fletcher.

“ We are, therefore, obliged to look out for another sense of the word *Τεταγμενοι*, and that is easily found. It is a passive participle of the verb *Τασσω*, which, although it has various significations, is never used to express eternal predestination of any kind. It is rendered *ordained* here, and Rom. xiii, 1, (where the margin certainly more properly renders it *ordered* ;) elsewhere, as chap. xv, 2, to *determine* ; 1 Cor. xvi. 15, to *addict* one’s self ; and frequently to *dispose, place, or appoint*. In the Greek Classics, in its passive form, it is generally used of men, who, having been appointed for some military expedition, (and set in their proper offices, as it is rendered, Luke, vii, 8,) were drawn up in battle array, for that purpose. So that it expresses, or refers, at once, to the action of their commander, marshalling them, and to their own presenting themselves in their proper places, to be led on to the intended expedition. So Dr. Dodridge, who adds, ‘ This I take to be precisely its sense here, and have therefore chosen the word *determine*, as having an ambiguity something like that in the original.—The meaning of the sacred penman seems to be, that all

who were deeply and seriously concerned about their eternal happiness, (whether that concern began now, or were of longer date,) *openly embraced the gospel* ; for surely none could be said to believe, who did not make an open profession of Christianity.’

In a similar sense, the clause is understood by Dr. Hammond, who renders it, ‘ *As many as were disposed for eternal life, believed* ’ ;—and by Dr. Heylin, whose translation and gloss upon it is, ‘ *As many as were in a fit disposition for eternal life, believed.* ’ Dr. Waterland, also, and many of the most learned expositors interpret it in the same manner, viz :—as describing those who were, *at this time*, in a disposition to comply with the terms on which God, by his Apostle, now offered them eternal life ; that is, to repent, believe and obey the gospel. In other words, ‘ As many as were brought to a resolution of courageously facing all opposition in the way to it, believed ; and openly embraced the christian religion, as the best means to prepare them for an endless life of the greatest virtue and purity, as well as of the greatest glory and most perfect happiness.’ The Syriac, likewise, one of the most ancient versions of the New Testament, has rendered the passage in the same sense, which is of great moment, as that translation was made before the meaning of this place was disputed by the different sects and parties of Christians. The sum is :—All those, and only those, now believed, who yielded to, instead of resisting, the convictions produced in their minds by the preaching of the truth, and the influence of the grace of God, which truth was preached with equal clearness to others, and which grace, in a similar way, visited and strove with others ; for God had not reprobated the rest. It was his will that they, also, should have been saved, but by yielding to inclinations, affections, and passions. which they themselves knew to be

sinful, and to which they were under no necessity of yielding, they rejected the counsel of God against themselves, and thrust salvation from them. For they who then repented and believed, were not constrained so to do, but grace and mercy were then freely and copiously offered to them, and pressed upon them, and they did not put it away, but yielded to its influence, so that a great multitude, even of such as, it seems, had been idolatrous Gentiles, were converted."

The passages which Mr. H. has cited from the first chapter of Ephesians, it is believed are so far from proving an individual and unconditional election, that they prove the reverse; for this is doubtless the object of the Apostle, to inform them (the Gentiles,) that God had predestinated them as well as the Jews, to the blessings of the promises made unto the fathers. The fact seems to be this;—the Gentiles had ever been considered as outcasts and reprobates from the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom; and when they and the Jews saw that God put no difference between them, but poured out upon them the gift of the Holy Ghost, as he had on the Jews at the beginning, they were astonished and said, "then hath God also to the *Gentiles* granted repentance unto life"! Now the object of the Apostle seems, evidently to be, to inform them that surprising as this might appear to them, or to the Gentiles themselves, it was no new thing with God; for he had purposed in himself even *before the foundation of the world*, to adopt the Gentiles into his family on the same conditions as he would the Jews, viz;—repentance towards God, and faith in Jesus Christ; and for the same purposes, viz;—that they "should be holy, *and without blame before him in love.*" ver. 4.

This explanation perfectly harmonises with the general tenor of the word of God, while the opposite only introdu-

ces darkness and confusion into the whole system of theology. Moreover, if we consult the 13th verse of the same chapter, we shall find that these blessings were not *sure* even to those subjects of predestination until they believed; for, says the Apostle, "In whom also *after that ye believed*, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise." Again, if we look at 2 Thess. ii. 13, we shall also find that *faith* is a condition of these blessings;—we are there told, that we are *chosen through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth,*" &c. Now as no man could either believe the truth, or be sanctified, before he has an existence, so no man could be absolutely elected to salvation, until he has an existence, and an opportunity to believe and be sanctified.

As the other passages cited, no more prove an unconditional election than the above, it will not be necessary to enter into a particular explanation of them here. This is the more unnecessary as we have had occasion in the course of this examination, to explain some of them.

The next objection in the way of the Calvinistic scheme of election, is contained in the following question of Mr. H. "Is not the purpose of God in election arbitrary?" p. 158.

In answer to this question he observes, that "if by the term *arbitrary* we mean, as it is often understood, *tyrannical, oppressive, or without reason*, nothing can be more erroneous or unjust." We are well aware that these dispositions cannot with propriety be attributed to the Deity, from a just view of the *Scripture doctrine* of election; but it is a question whether the views of our opponents on this subject, do not render it impossible to draw any other conclusion. We are aware also that they deny these conclusions; but they must first reconcile *their views* of election with reason and Revelation, before they can reasonably expect that their denial of these consequences will be taken as proof. The

question then is, whether the doctrines of *unconditional* election and *reprobation* do not represent the Almighty as “*tyrannical, oppressive, and without reason.*” The election of a part of mankind unconditionally, certainly represents the Deity as using partiality, and of course, as being a respecter of persons ; for the advocates of that system assert, that the election of some to life, and the reprobation of all the rest to eternal death, was not on account of “*any moral distinction in them.*” Now it is certainly unreasonable to suppose that a God of infinite goodness, whose very nature is love, should thus act the part of a *tyrant* with his creatures. And it would certainly be *oppressive* to that part of mankind who are not elected, for they are not reprobated on account of their sins ; for their reprobation (according to Calvinism) took place not only before the reprobates had committed one sin, but even before the foundation of the world ! But if they were reprobated on account of their sins foreseen by God, then their reprobation was conditional ; and of course was not the effect of an eternal and unalterable decree. I conclude therefore, that the doctrines of election and reprobation as held by the Calvinists, do represent the God of love whose tender mercies are over all his works, as *tyrannical, oppressive, and without reason.* But I am happy in the consideration that we have not so learned of Christ, and that a more consistent system of divinity is taught in the word of God, and by a large majority of the Christian world.—A system which at once justifies the ways of God with man, and opens up the way for a wretched and rebel world to the throne of their offended Lord.

But Mr. H. will admit the term *arbitrary* provided nothing more is meant by it than “that the great Jehovah acts according to his own pleasure, or from motives entirely within himself.” As to the term *arbitrary*, we do not con-

tend for the use of it, but that its use even in its worst signification is proper when viewed in relation to the system of our opponents. We do suppose however that when God elects any person, it is "according to the good pleasure of his will," and that the same good pleasure which elects one man, would elect all men, if they should comply with the terms of the gospel; which they all may do while their day of grace lasts. To support these assertions, we only need to consult the word of God. He, "who worketh all things after the counsel of *his own will*," "will have all men to be *saved*, and come to the knowledge of the truth." He laments over Jerusalem, and tells them, that *it was* the good pleasure of his will "to gather them, &c. but that *they* would not." Again, he says, that it is not the good pleasure of his will that *any* should perish, but that all should come to repentance. And lest we should disbelieve him, he puts himself under oath, and swears by his own eternal life, "that he has no pleasure in the death of the wicked."

As to the other part of the above, if Mr. H. means by "motive," the ground or moving cause of the election of any, we agree that it is "entirely within himself;" for it is the effect of the good pleasure of his will. "God so *loved* the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." In this text, *love* is the *motive* or ground of election; and *believing* the condition upon which we are to be elected;—and is the act of the creature.

The next objection in his way is contained in the following question:—"Does not this doctrine make God a respecter of persons?" p. 158.

In answering this question, Mr. H. supposes that his views of this subject, or this doctrine according to his views of it,

“forms the only ground upon which the character of God can be vindicated from this objection.” He attempts to show that to be a respecter of persons, is the being partial to one on account of something which he possesses ; or, in his own language; it is “ uniformly to bestow favours upon some men, and not on others, on account of something which they possess, of which others are destitute.” And to prove that his definition is just, quotes James ii. 1—4. Now if this is the true definition of what it is to be a respecter of persons, and it is proper to apply this definition in the question before us, it will be impossible to clear the character of God from this charge according to the Scriptures ; for in one of the very texts which Mr. H. has quoted, (Acts x. 34, 35,) and which represents God as no respecter of persons, he is represented as *accepting* those and those only in every nation, who *fear him and work righteousness*. What is it to fear God and work righteousness, but to comply with the terms of the gospel ? And what is this, but the possessing something, even a penitent heart, which others who never repent do never possess ? Now it is certain that throughout the Scriptures, God is represented as accepting and saving sinners, on their compliance with the terms of salvation, and in no other way. If then this is the true definition of the term, God is what Peter declared he was not, a respecter of persons ! But it will be found on examination, that the partiality mentioned by James, is a *sinful* accepting the persons of the rich (ver. 6) and despising the poor. The definition of our author then, is by no means applicable in the question under consideration ; forasmuch as it is not possible for the God of goodness to be actuated by *bad* motives. To be a respecter of persons then appears to be, the using partiality towards particular persons from bad principles and bad motives. Now as neither of these can exist in the Deity, so

neither can he be a respecter of persons in the proper acceptation of the term.

The question at issue then is, whether the doctrines of unconditional election and reprobation, do not attribute this partiality to God. We think they do; nor do we think that Mr. H. has cleared his system from the imputation. For if God, without any regard to the sinner's compliance as the condition, chose some to everlasting life, and unconditionally reprobated all the rest, without any regard to *moral* distinction, and indeed when there was no moral distinction, it will be impossible to show that he is not a respecter of persons. As our opponents contend that election does not take place on account of any moral distinction in the elect, (see the Appendix) so, it is presumed, they will not contend that reprobation takes place on account of any moral distinction in the reprobates. Now we say that these doctrines represent the Almighty as a respecter of persons in the worst acceptation of the word.

But to establish his views of election, Mr. H. states that God bestows unequal favours upon his creatures. "He has given the gospel to men and not to angels." p. 160. Very true; because men had not sinned beyond the reach of mercy, but angels had; or mercy would have been manifested to them as well as to man. Again he says, "He has given the gospel to some nations, and not to others." If Mr. H. means the *written* gospel, it is true; but it is not true that the gospel in *no sense* has been preached to all nations; for the grace of God that bringeth *salvation* hath appeared to *all* *men*. Nevertheless it is true that God distributes his gifts unequally among mankind, but not the gift of eternal life; this is freely offered to all, and may be accepted by all during our day of merciful visitation. Notwithstanding the Lord gives to one *five*, to another *two*, and to another *one* talent,



yet "*his* ways are equal," forasmuch as there is no accountable being but has at least one talent ; and the improvement of that, if we have no more, will secure the divine blessing. The unequal distribution of gifts, by the divine hand then, does not prove the doctrine of unconditional election and reprobation.

"But if," says he, "from the mass of men equally corrupt, and ill-deserving, he takes whom he pleases, and makes them the heirs of his grace, how can it be said that he is guilty of respecting their persons?"—How?—Why if his choice is unconditional, the same power which makes one an heir of grace could make every one so ; and if there is no reason why they are not all made heirs of grace, except what is "entirely within himself," and yet all are not made heirs of grace, it is impossible to avoid the conclusion, that he uses partiality, and is a respecter of persons. For instance, suppose twenty men, among whom is Mr. H. are confined in prison under sentence of death for a capital offence ; the government, from reasons *entirely within itself*, and without any conditions to be previously performed by the criminals, who are all equally guilty, freely pardons all except Mr. H.—There was no want of power nor goodness in the government. Twenty could be pardoned with as much ease and honour to the government, as nineteen. Pray would he not think that the government had respect to persons ? Would he not complain of partiality ? Indeed would not any man, and with good reason too ? This in our view, is a fair representation of the doctrine of election, as held by our opponents ; for I do not recollect that they any where assert, that the unconditional damnation of a part of the human race is necessary to support the honour of the divine government. If then the honour of the divine government does not require it, and such were the fact, our opponents, and indeed

no one else could give the least reason for such a step in the divine Being. And indeed all the reason which they attempt to give, in their articles of faith is, that "the sovereignty of God is directed by wise and holy reasons!"

Again he says—"If, as those who are most ready to urge this objection, against the doctrine of election usually suppose, that he be influenced by some foreseen goodness, such as morality or repentance, which was not the effect of his Spirit, and on this account they become the objects of his choice, he is certainly guilty of this charge." p. 160. Who Mr. H. means by "those who most readily urge the objection" under consideration, I know not; but if he means the Methodists as a people, one of two things is true—either he is ignorant of our doctrines, or misrepresents them; for the description in the above quotation is utterly inconsistent with the doctrines of our church. But what is the description?—Why that God's "choice is influenced by *some foreseen goodness, which was NOT THE EFFECT OF HIS SPIRIT!*" Now I seriously doubt whether any class of Christians hold to this sentiment; and from nearly twelve years' intimate acquaintance with the Methodist church, I can assert that no such doctrine is taught by them. We every where assert, both from the pulpit and from the press, that man is by the fall totally depraved.—That in him by nature dwells no good thing.—And that by the atonement he is raised to a state of trial and probation, and during that trial has the free offers of salvation, by the word, or Spirit, or both.—That the *moving cause* of his making provision for the salvation of all men, was the *great love* wherewith he loved us in the gift of Jesus Christ.—And that he has offered this salvation to all, on certain conditions, such as repentance, faith, and obedience unto death, or to our lives' end. We moreover assert, that these conditions *cannot* be complied with, without the agency of the Holy Spirit, or in other words, "No man

can come unto Christ except the Father draw him."—That all the good there is in man is by virtue of the atonement, and is *effected* by the word or spirit. And that all are favored with the drawings of the Father, and may during their day of visitation, comply with the terms of salvation and be saved. And that those drawings of the Father are never ineffectual, except by the resistance of them by the sinner. Whatever weight, therefore, the argument may have with others, it certainly has none with us.

We therefore continue to urge the objection, as the legitimate offspring of Calvinism. We now pass to the next question—"If the doctrine of Election be true, how can it be shown that God is sincere, in freely offering salvation unto all?" Same page.

The very outset of the answer of Mr. H. to this question, it is easy to show, is erroneous. "That God chooses to give some men repentance and others not." While treating of "*natural ability*," he very clearly holds forth, that God requires no more of men than they are able to perform.—But he will not deny, that God has "*commanded all men every where to repent*." Can they, then, repent, except repentance be given to them? 1. He says, nothing is required but what we are able to perform. 2. God has commanded all men every where to repent. 3. And yet "he chooses not to give repentance to some!"

Leaving Mr. H. to reconcile these contradictions, we pass to prove that repentance is given to all men. It is presumed that no one will contend, that the Jews and Gentiles, do not comprise the whole human family; but of the former, it is said, that "Christ was exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel," &c.—and of the latter it is said, "Then hath God also to the Gentiles *granted repentance unto life*." But it may be objected that this does not

prove that the gift is universal; to which I answer, I think it does—but, if not, the universal command for “*all men every where to repent*,” certainly does; for we all agree with Mr. H. (p. 152,) that the requirements of God, in their most *perfect* and *extensive* form are limited to the ability of men,” though we differ with him as to the *nature* of that ability. So that when he assumes the authority to call his doctrine, of the limited gift of repentance, “*The fact*,” he should first have proved it to be true.

The next error in his answer to the question, will be seen on reading to the first period. “We can form no conception from the fact, that God chooses to give some men repentance, and not others, how he should be thought to be insincere, in freely offering pardon and acceptance unto all, unless it be, because he knows they will refuse.” p. 160. Indeed! I think there is a cause very far aside from the knowledge of God, upon which the charge of insincerity might be grounded, if the doctrines of unconditional election and reprobation were true! For suppose that God has, according to Calvinism, unconditionally reprobated a part of mankind, to everlasting death, from reasons “entirely within himself,” it certainly is not *possible* for those persons ever to be saved. Now if he “*freely offer pardon and acceptance*,” to these persons, to whom he “*chooses not to give repentance*,” unto life, what is it but insincerity? But will the same result follow from the knowledge of God? It certainly will not; for while he knows that some will refuse, he knows, with equal certainty, that it *is possible* for *all* to accept of offered mercy, while their day of visitation lasts. This, then, is only a miserable shift of our opponents to hide the native deformity of their own system, and make others help bear the enormous burthen of their own errors. Is it not from the influence of the system we oppose, that many of its ad-

vocates offer free salvation to all, while they believe that God has unalterably reprobated a part of the human race? We often hear them assert, that all may be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth *if they will*. But do they believe, that it is possible for all men to be saved? Surely not, if they believe that God has chosen a definite number to salvation, and unalterably reprobated all the rest to the flames of hell forever. But how will they reconcile this belief with their freely offering life and salvation to all men? I doubt if it can be done; but if they answered fairly, would they not say, in substance, as follows.—All those whom God, from eternity, particularly and unconditionally, elected to be the heirs of salvation, he, sometime in the course of their lives, (when they have sinned as much as will be for the “greatest possible good of the universe,) irresistibly makes them *willing* to be saved. Now although it is utterly impossible for any others (for the want of being elected and irresistibly made willing,) ever to be saved; yet we may freely offer salvation to all, knowing that those, and those only, will accept of it, who were elected, and who are irresistibly made willing! Now I ask, when people hear a Calvinist minister assert that all may be saved, do they not understand him to mean, that all may come to Christ and live forever? And do not such ministers know that the people understand them to mean, that it is possible for all to be saved? And do they not suffer the people to go away laboring under this mistake of the real sentiments of such ministers? And is this just and right? Answer it, O ye Calvinist Ministers, at the bar of an enlightened conscience!

That God is willing all should be saved, whether *they will* or no, is proved from the following passages.—“Who will have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth.” 1 Tim. ii, 4. Here is no *if they will*, but

a broad assertion and expression of God's will in regard to the salvation of all men, whether they accept of it or not.—How just will be the final destruction of the impenitent, if they do not accept, on this principle ! “ He is long-suffering to us ward, *not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*” 2 Peter, iii, 9. From this it seems, God is willing all should come to repentance, and yet Mr. H. has the assurance to call it “*The fact, that God chooses to give repentance to some men, and not to others !*” But this has been sufficiently refuted above. While we have this text under consideration, we will notice the turn which he gives to it, in order to save his theory. He observes, (p. 216,) “ It would seem as though the Apostle cautiously designed to avoid being understood to mean any other than his christian brethren ; ” “ but is long-suffering to us ward.” Now that this text includes all men will be seen on asking the following question.—Why is he long suffering ? Answer :—Because he “ is not willing that *any* should *perish*, but that *all* should *come to repentance.*” But has not the true Christian already come to repentance ? Here is the absurdity of Mr. H.'s explanation, according to his own theory. He is long suffering to true Christians, (who, of course, have repented,) not being willing that any should perish, but that all *true Christians* should *come to repentance !* According to this, true Christians must come to repentance or *perish* forever !

We have already shown the irreconcilable difference between the Calvinistic scheme of election, and the foreknowledge of God ; so that when Mr. H. supposes that “ precisely the same answer,” (p. 161,) which would vindicate the system of those who believe in the doctrine of foreknowledge, would vindicate his own system, he labors under a very great mistake.

Suppose the "Armenian," of whom he speaks, should answer as he anticipates, "That the knowledge of God, does not affect the agency of man," &c. "precisely the same answer," would not clear the system of our opponents from its absurdity, unless they can make it appear, that an *unalterable decree* to damn a man, does not render it *impossible* for him to be saved. And when they do this, doubtless the sky will fall, and we shall catch larks.

Moreover, Mr. H. by the above expressions, tacitly acknowledges, that the answer which the Armenian would give, would be sufficient to clear the doctrine of foreknowledge from any embarrassment which might be thought to attach to the subject; but it remains to be proved, that the same answer will clear the calvinistic scheme from its embarrassments. Many and serious are the objections which our author finds in his way. Another is contained in the following question:—"But if it be admitted, that all things, are present with the Lord, and that what according to the order of time, is called foreknowledge, has no influence upon the agency of man, still how can it be just in God, to make some the objects of his favour, and not others?" p. 162.—To answer this question and obviate the objection contained in it, Mr. H. inquires,—“But on whom does this discriminating influence of the Holy Spirit operate unjustly!”—“On those who reject and are lost?” I answer, yes, on the Calvinistic scheme it does; and on all the rest with partiality—for in relation to those who “reject and are lost,” that system teaches, that God sends them light, that they may be the more blind; and the word of his salvation, that they may be the more deaf; and operates on their hearts by the influence of his Holy Spirit, that he may make their damnation the more aggravated;—see appendix. On these then, according to Mr. H. the Holy Spirit operates unjustly.

But he asks again, "But is God under obligation to convert them?" I answer, yes, if it is possible for him to do it *unconditionally*; for he is *loving* to *every man*, and his "*tender mercies* are over *all* his works;" and he is "not willing that *any* should perish." If then none are rejected only from reasons "entirely within himself," the same love that obliges him to save one, would oblige him to save all; and did not men prevent their own salvation by sin, all would be saved, and of course the Calvinistic doctrine of eternal reprobation is without foundation.

But again he asks, "Would he after he has freely offered them," (the reprobates) "salvation, and they have rejected, be unjust to leave them to their own choice?" Plausible as this question may appear at first view, it is easy to discover that it is utterly irreconcilable with the other parts of the Calvinistic scheme. Here the reprobates are represented as being finally lost, as a consequence of their having "rejected the free offer of salvation;" but pray is this the only or even the main reason why they are finally lost? Does not Mr. H. subscribe to the sentiment, that "God hath ordained whatsoever comes to pass?" And if so, does he not believe that God has unalterably decreed, that the reprobates *shall* "reject the offer of salvation," and be lost? Where then is the justice of their condemnation? "Their own choice," it seems, was his choice too, unless he chose one thing and decreed another!

Again, Mr. H. tacitly gives up his doctrine of eternal decrees, by saying that those who are lost, were not "left to their own choice," till "*after*" he had freely offered them salvation, and they had rejected it. This is all we ask for. We also believe, that it is just in God to "give sinners over to a reprobate mind," and to send them strong delusion, &c. *that they all might be damned who have pleasure in unrighteousness,* *after* they have had the offer of salvation, and



have rejected it ! But if it was not done till after the offer was made and rejected, it certainly was not done by an *eternal* decree.

But our author strenuously contends, that in electing some to everlasting life, God's choice was not influenced in the least by a foresight of the compliance of the elect with the terms of the gospel ; and does he not as firmly believe, (though perhaps not so willing to have it known) that in the reprobation of all the rest of mankind, His choice was not in the least influenced by a foresight of the non-compliance of the reprobates with the terms of salvation ? And if so, why does he talk of their being "*left* to their own choice" as the *just reward* of their having *rejected* the offer of salvation ?—Does he expect to persuade an enlightened public to believe, that God has from all eternity unalterably decreed the damnation of a part of the human family, and to secure the end decreed that the reprobates *shall* "reject the offer of salvation," and yet that they are *justly* condemned to everlasting burnings for those sins ? At one time he will have it, that God has unalterably decreed the damnation of a part, and all the events leading to that end ; and at another, that their being finally lost, is because they reject the offer of salvation ! Reconcile this who can ! Again he says, "It is presumed that no one will contend, that it" (the doctrine of election) "will operate unjustly, in reference to the righteous." No ; but with great partiality and respect to persons, on the Calvinistic system of theology. But he attempts to obviate the objection by a reference to the Scriptures.—"Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own ? Is thine eye evil because I am good ?" Matt. xx. 15. p. 163. Whoever duly considers the design of our Lord, in the parable in which this text is found, will at once see, that nothing like unconditional election and reprobation can be gathered from it.

The fact is, the Scribes and Pharisees, were great advocates for the doctrine of election. Their cry was, "The people of the Lord are *we*, the people of the Lord are *we*." When our Lord therefore manifested his design to grant unto the Gentiles repentance unto life, they complained of the *good man of the house* and said, "This man receiveth sinners," &c. "These last (the Gentiles) have wrought but *one hour*, and thou hast made them equal unto us (the Jews) who have borne the burden and heat of the day." To reprove them for their *narrow views* of his *goodness*, he answers one of them in the above language.—"Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own; is thine eye evil because I am good?" Viewed then according to the original design of the parable, it so far from forming any support to the system of our opponents, is directly against it.

But to the question, Is it not lawful for Him to do what He will with His own? I answer, yes; for He "wills that *all should be saved*, and come to the knowledge of the truth;" and for this purpose has made it possible for all to ~~be~~ saved. Hence He has done what He would with His own; and it is lawful for Him so to do. And should any whose eye had been rendered near-sighted by a warm attachment to a particular creed, begin to complain of the good man of the house, saying, Thou art no respecter of persons, but in *every nation* he that feareth thee and worketh righteousness is accepted of thee; thou hast not *unconditionally* elected any man, but it is necessary that even Christians should give all diligence "to *make* their calling and election *sure*,"—I say, should any begin thus to complain, the above answer of our Lord to the murmuring Jews will be equally applicable to them.

The last question upon this subject contains nothing but a few unimportant assertions without proof: one of them is the following:—"Every real Christian, whatever may be

his views in this world, when he arrives at the kingdom of heaven, will come cheerfully into this doctrine." p. 163. Now suppose that I should assert that every real Christian, however Calvinistic his views may be in this world, when he arrives at the kingdom of heaven, will come cheerfully into the doctrines of Methodism.—People would probably say, Why it is at most only the opinion of Mr. L.—Eternity alone can decide that. Precisely the same answer would we give to Mr. H. I as much believe the one as he does the other, but shall not assert at present that it *will be so* !

Again, speaking of the elect, he observes, "He will there" (in heaven) "delight to ascribe his conversion, sanctification, and complete redemption entirely to God; and it will not detract in the least from the greatness of the mercy he has received, because he who bestowed it upon him, meant to do it, and *eternally* meant to do it."

By the assertion, "*eternally meant to do it*," I suppose Mr. H. means the same as *eternally decreed to do it*. Now all the answer I wish to give to these groundless assertions is the following.—Will not the reprobate there (in hell) delight to ascribe his iniquities, pollution, and complete destruction entirely to God; (on the principles of our opponents) and will it not detract much from the greatness of the sufferings which they will endure, and also from the justice and goodness of God, because he who unconditionally bestowed damnation upon them, meant to do it, and *eternally meant* or decreed to do it?

Finally, to conclude our remarks upon this subject, and briefly to give my views of the doctrine of election, I would remark,—1. There is a *personal* election of some to superior advantages over others in this life: such as greater intellectual powers of mind, greater advantages by birth, education, property, influence, friends, &c.—Yet the ways of the

Lord are just and equal on this ground, that "Where much is given much is required" in the improvement of the gift; and "where little is given the less is required:" and "so every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour."—2. There is a *national* election.—Such was the election of the Jews as a nation, to great civil and ecclesiastical privileges above other nations of the earth. "What advantage hath the Jews? or what profit is there of circumcision? *Much every way*: chiefly because that unto *them* were committed the oracles of God." Rom. iii. 1, 2. "Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh *Christ came*." Rom. ix. 4, 5. Such also is America, England, and some other nations, when compared with the Pagan and Mahometan world.—And the same argument as above will justify the divine dispensations with nations as well as with individuals. Hence we may suppose the Gentile hath *one* talent, the Jew *two* and the Christian *five*.—3. There is a *spiritual* election of all in every nation, who sincerely repent, and firmly believe in Jesus Christ, and with the mouth make confession to salvation, according to the light of their dispensations. These continue to bear the character of "God's elect," while they continue to "cry day and night unto him;" and should they continue to 'give dilligence to *make* their calling and election *sure*' unto their lives' end, they *shall never fall*. These are the conditions of our election; but the ground or foundation of it is that *love*, which caused the Son of God to leave his Father's right hand for the pang of death:—"by the grace of God to taste death for *every man*." Let every one of God's elect therefore, "*fear* lest a promise being left them of entering into his rest, any of *them* should come short of it."

‘But exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day, lest *my* be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.’—“For we are made partakers of Christ, *if we hold* the beginning of our confidence *steadfast unto the end.*”



## CHAPTER IX.

### *On the Perseverance of the Saints.*

SECTION twelfth of the work before us, contains the remarks of Mr. H. on the *Perseverance of the Saints*. This doctrine our opponents hold from choice, or necessity, or perhaps from both. It is *inseparably* connected with the other parts of the Calvinistic system ; for if God has unconditionally elected some men to eternal life, doubtless they cannot avoid persevering to the end. And on the other hand, if he has unconditionally reprobated all the rest, doubtless they cannot avoid persevering to eternal death ; but should it be shown that this key-stone of their “royal arch” has no existence, it will do much towards showing that the whole system is defective.

The first question is, “What are we to understand by the perseverance of the saints ?” p. 163. So full does the apostasy of thousands of real Christians stare our opponents in the face, that our author commences his answer to the above question, by making a number of concessions.—“It is not meant,” says he, “when we assert that the saints will certainly persevere, but that they may be left to commit great sins.” “Noah, Abraham, Moses, Elijah, David, Solomon and Paul, were left to show very decidedly that they were imperfect, after they had become eminently pious.”

Here, I think, our author has taken for granted what re-

mains to be proved, viz ;—that the *Lord* “*leaves* men to commit great sins,” while their day of visitation lasts. I say while their day of grace lasts ; for after this is *past*, no doubt but sinners are *left* to commit sin, having entirely rejected the offer of salvation.—But Mr. H. does not allow that these mentioned above, were thus given over to a reprobate mind, but contends, that they were children of God, notwithstanding their great sins. Now that the Lord leaves no man to commit sin, while his day of merciful visitation lasts, is abundantly proved from the word of God.—“The Lord is *with you* while ye be *with him* ; but if ye *forsake him*, he will *forsake you*.” From this it is plain the Lord leaves no man until he leaves the Lord. Moreover, does not Mr H. tacitly acknowledge by this assertion, that if they had not been *left* by God to commit sin, they would not have exhibited these marks of imperfection ? And does he not, therefore, indirectly charge God with being the author of their great sins ? But to the main point. He acknowledges these men did commit great sins, even “after they had become eminently pious.” This concession is, of itself, sufficient, to prove the possibility of the entire apostacy of the saints ; for, “he that sinneth,” (and especially he that commits “*great sins*,”) is of the devil.” Now let us try the sentiment of our author by this text. “Eminently pious” men may “commit great sins,” without endangering their *eternal* interest, but “he that sinneth is of the devil.”—Therefore, eminently pious men may be of the devil without endangering their eternal interest ! But take one out of the number of those mentioned above—say the case of David, for example. He was eminently pious—“a man after God’s own heart,”—and yet it will not be denied but that he committed adultery, and covered it with murder. But will it be contended, that at the time of these acts of sin, David per-

sed the grace of God in his heart? Was he at this time child of God—a man after God's own heart? It is true . H. admits, (p. 164,) that David, “for a time, lost all *appearance* of piety,” but this itself shows, that he believes David was pious all the while at heart—that he only “lost *appearance* of piety”! David's visiting Uriah's bed, and then concealing it with murder, did not, according to . H. endanger his eternal salvation in the least! Now error of this doctrine appears. 1. From the word of God—“no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him;” but David was a murderer, therefore David, at *that* time, had *eternal life abiding in him*. He was, therefore, entirely justified, not in “*appearance*,” only, but in reality. 2. From its licentiousness. Not a crime, however heinous in sight of God, or disgraceful to human nature, but may be committed with perfect safety (as to any *eternal* loss,) by the sinner! O, ye believers in such a sentiment! Do you know the exceeding great liberty of the gospel? You may visit your neighbor's bed, and if it is likely to be known, you may murder him, and yet lose nothing but the “*appearance* of piety:” you will still be the dear children of God, and in the direct way to heaven! Oh! error! error! error! what art thou doing in our world! 3. The error of this doctrine appears from this, that it destroys the probationary state of the Christian in this life. The present according to our opponents, is with him, a state of confirmation. The probationary state, according to them, lasts no longer than the day of our conversion. After this he *cannot* commit a sin, which will finally shut him out of heaven! But it may be said, that when a christian sins against God, he suffers for it in this life. The stings of a guilty conscience, for wounding the spirit, in the house of his friend, forms a most severe punishment. But do not sinners suffer the stings of a guilty

conscience in this life, and damnation in the next besides ?— Now if the sinner suffer for the same offence, in this life, all that the christian suffers for the same, and eternal destruction besides, will it not argue that the same sin in a christian is not so heinous as in the sinner ? Is this the truth ? Do not all agree that we had better never have known the way of righteousness, than, after we have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to us ? And is it not also certain, that “ *If we sin wilfully, after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin.* ” ? Surely the christian cannot sin so cheap as the sinner, but his sin against the greater light is the greater offence. But this sentiment of our opponents, not only destroys the probationary state of the christian in this life, but, “ so far, mingles the scenes of retribution, with those of trial and probation.” So that the very pit, which Mr. H. has dug, (p. 87,) for his opponent, his own system has plunged himself into. Another remark of his, is the following:—“ It is, however, most certain, that they may be real christians, while no distinguishing evidences are seen by men in their conduct.” p. 164. Now, to show what contradictions error will lead men to, we have only to make another quotation from the same page.—“ They have no evidence that they are christians, when they exhibit no appearance of holiness in their conduct.” Here we are told that they have *no evidence* that they are christians, unless they exhibit the fruits of holiness in their conduct ; but *there*, that it is *certain* that they may be *real christians*, while *no* distinguishing evidences are seen ! This last statement, if it were true, would be of great importance to the character of David, (and, indeed, to every backslider,) as it would make him to have been a “ *real christian*,” while guilty of adultery and murder. But what answer would our



Lord have given to the pretensions of *such* "real christians"? Doubtless the same which he gave to the Jews, by the mouth of John—"O, generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth, therefore, *fruits meet* for repentance," &c. "By their fruits ye shall know them; do men gather grapes from thorns," or adultery and murder from real christians?—Surely not. The sentiment, therefore, which we oppose, belongs not to the "*building fitly framed.*"

The next attempt of our author to establish his theory, is by a reference to the parable of the ten virgins. His first argument from it is, "real christians may be asleep."—"They all slumbered and slept." Now if this argument proves any thing in the way he has used it, it certainly proves too much; for, on this ground, 1. There is no distinction between the righteous and the wicked. 2. It would prove that all real christians sleep in sin; for "*they all* slumbered and slept," both the *wise* and *foolish*. As this ground is utterly untenable, we must seek for the original design of the parable, which, we think, will set the subject at rest, as to any argument to be drawn from it in this debate. It should, however, be remembered, that in explaining parables, we must not expect to find a correspondence in every minute particular.—This is impossible. Hence we are not to understand by the words, "*five* of them were wise, and *five* were foolish," that mankind are equally divided in their moral characters. 1. Then, by the "*ten virgins,*" I understand, all mankind—that, when they arrive to a state of accountability, they are all favored with a degree of spiritual light. "The grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men," &c. I understand, by this light, *their lamps*, with which they all set out. 2. By *five* being *wise*, I understand that a part of mankind

by repentance, faith, and obedience, obtain, in addition to awakening grace, conversion and sanctification ; which is what is meant by the wise taking oil in their vessels with their lamps." 3. I understand by the "lamps of the foolish going out," that a part of the human family sin away their day of merciful visitation, and "the light which was in them becomes darkness." They are given over to a hard heart and a reprobate mind. 4. By the "Bridegroom," I understand, Jesus Christ—and, by his tarrying, the whole period of time from the creation to the last day. 5. By "all slumbering and sleeping," I understand the temporal death, (or a change somewhat similar to it,) of all the human race. 6. By the "cry at midnight, behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him," I understand the "voice of the archangel, and the trump of God," and the resurrection of the dead. 7. By the wise being ready, and entering with the bridegroom to the marriage supper, I understand the preparation for, and reception of, the righteous to heaven. By the foolish begging for oil, and obtaining none, I understand the anxiety, perplexity, and utter confusion of the wicked at the last day.

My main reason for believing this to be the true meaning of this parable is this :—it best agrees with the scope and evident design of the whole chapter ; which is to set forth man's accountability, and the retributions of the day of judgment. If this be so, neither Mr. H. nor ourselves will find any particular help from it in this controversy. Indeed we need it not, the Bible is full to our purpose without controverted passages.

The last concession of Mr. H. is on page 165. He observes—"It is not meant by the perseverance of the Saints, that such as have been born again, will be saved let them do what they will. It would be a contradiction in terms.—

We might with equal propriety assert, that they will certainly persevere, though they fall away."

I thank Mr. H. for his assistance in refuting his own system. This is an important concession indeed; and in this his good understanding must have got the better of his creed, and suddenly carried him captive by the power of truth, He must also have felt a measure of the same spirit, which taught Ezekiel to say, "When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity and *dieth* in them, for the iniquity that he hath done shall he *die*." Here is the first and second death. But he acknowledges that those who "have been born again, shall not be saved, do what they will."—And what will they do?—Why according to Mr. H. they not only "may be left to occasional imperfections," but also "to commit very aggravating sins." We shall all agree then with him and the prophet Ezekiel, that even those *who have been born again* shall not be saved, if they commit very aggravating sins, and die in them! And indeed as Mr. H. asserts, to affirm the contrary "would be a contradiction in terms." But does he mean to say, that it is possible for those who have been born again, so to fall away as finally to be lost? This is the plain import of his words, but cannot be his meaning; for he doubtless believes that God has unalterably decreed the salvation of a part of mankind. Now as no man in his senses can suppose that it is possible to break God's decree, so it cannot be that he believes at the same time that it is possible for one of God's elect ever to perish. But he acknowledges that to say the Christian shall be saved do what he will, "would be to assert, that he shall certainly persevere, though he fall away."

Now I ask, does not Mr. H. in substance assert the very thing which he here brands with being a contradiction in terms? Does he not assert, that the true Christian *shall* be

saved? And does he not also assert, that the true Christian may fall away so as to be guilty of "very great and aggravating sins?"

The following is the definition which Mr. H. gives of the perseverance of the saints:—

"It is meant by perseverance, that all who are regenerated and made partakers of the grace of God, although they may be left to occasional imperfections, and to commit very aggravating sins, will be enabled so far to hold on their way, as on the whole to wax stronger and stronger, till the work of sanctification be completed. In other words, it is meant that 'He which hath begun a good work in them, will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ.'" p. 165. But is it possible for a man to wax stronger and stronger in the Lord, and at the same time be guilty of very aggravating sins? Surely this is new divinity! Let us try this sentiment by the word of God.—"Being made *free from sin* and become servants of God, ye have your fruit *unto holiness*, and the end everlasting life." It would seem from this, and other like passages of the word of God, that those who would "wax stronger and stronger till the work of sanctification be completed," must not "commit very aggravating sins;" but be made free from sin. But let us see whether the text which he has in his definition can render his theory any support.—"Being confident of this very thing that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Phil. i. 6. It will not be difficult here to show, that this text as explained by our opponents, proves more than they will be willing to allow; for—1. It is presumed no one will deny but that conviction is the work of God, or that it is a good work.—2. The Scriptures abundantly establish the point, that God does begin this good work in the hearts of all men. The conclusion then is, (if their explana-

tion be just) that all mankind will inevitably be saved ! This explanation then will not do, as it contradicts the general tenor of God's word. We must therefore seek for another ; and that is easily found in the context. It is no good evidence of the goodness of a cause, when in order to carry our points, we are under the necessity of detaching passages from their connexion, when that connexion is obviously necessary for a fair understanding of the text. This however, we think our author has done in the quotation of this text. But what were the grounds of the Apostle's confidence, that he who had begun a good work in them would perform it, &c. ?—1. From their past faithfulness : “ For your fellowship in the gospel *from the first day until now.* ”—2. From their present willingness to *suffer* and *labour* : “ Inasmuch as *both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace.* ” By grace here, the Apostle doubtless means his sufferings ; which he considered a favour, as they worked together for his good.—From their past faithfulness, the love he bore to them, and their present devotedness to the cause of God, the Apostle was confident that that they would be co-workers together with God ; and knowing that he on his part would not be unfaithful to work in them, so long as they were faithful to “ work out their own salvation with fear and trembling,” he was therefore confirmed in the opinion, that the Philippian Brethren would persevere. Might not these faithful souls have turned aside after Satan, and so made shipwreck of their faith ? Surely they might : especially if they had been “ *left to commit very aggravating sins !* ” This text then proves nothing more than that the Lord is never unfaithful on his part ; and that all who are co-workers with him to the end of life, shall never fall.

The second question is, “ What evidence have we of the truth of this doctrine ? ”

The first argument used by Mr. H. to prove the final perseverance of the saints, is the connexion of this doctrine with that of decrees.—“One argument,” says he, “may be derived from the fact that God is determined to save some of our race.” To this I reply, that we also believe that God is determined to save *all* of our race, provided all comply with the terms of the gospel; and on the contrary, he is determined that “except we repent we shall *all* perish.” But we are ready to grant, that the final perseverance of the saints, stands or falls with the doctrine of unconditional election.—But as we have before considered this point, it is unnecessary here.

Again, after mentioning what God has done for the salvation of the world, he observes—“The supposition that he has been at this expense, while in his own mind, it was uncertain whether a single individual should ever be benefitted by it, must be considered a base reflection upon his character.” p. 165. This whole proposition proceeds upon this false notion, that God could not know perfectly, that some among free agents would comply with the terms of the gospel, persevere to the end, and be saved, without having first decreed that it should be so. This having been proved however to be a false notion, the argument built upon it is without foundation.

Again he says—“But if he has so far determined the salvation of any individual, that their salvation is certain, it will be seen that upon every legitimate principle of reasoning, their perseverance is equally certain.” p. 165. Doubtless, by “*determined*” here, Mr. H. means nothing different from the term *decree*; and if so, it is a pity he did not use plain and unequivocal terms. This argument is much like the former, with this difference, that it conveys the idea that necessity and certainty are the same: which it is presumed

is by no means the case. If God has unalterably determined or decreed, that some men shall be saved, doubtless their salvation is matter of necessity; but not otherwise. It is matter of certainty that I write, but is it matter of necessity?—may I not lay down my pen, and turn my attention to something else?

The substance of his second argument is derived “from those metaphors which are used in the Bible, to represent the security of the saints.” The first is that by which Christ is styled the *good shepherd*; and Mr. H. has quoted the following passage, and in the following mutilated manner.—“I am the good shepherd.” (John x. 11.) “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and I give unto them eternal life.” ver. 27, 28. This is another proof that to carry their points, our opponents are reduced to the miserable shift of mutilating the word of God. The Presbyterians have quoted it in the same way, in their Confession of Faith, adopted May, 1821. The important condition of “*following*” Christ, is essential to the perfection of the passage. Restore this, and it makes nothing for our opponents; for we all agree, that those who continue to *hear* his voice, and *follow* him, shall *never perish*. Thus the poet—

“Unless the fold *we first forsake,*  
The wolf *can never harm.*”

So important a consideration is following Christ, that he himself has made it a principal condition of discipleship; saying, “If *any man* will be my disciple, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily and *follow* me.” Let any man continue to do this, and he has the character of a sheep of Christ; and while he sustains this character he shall never perish. Nay, I am persuaded with the Apostle, that “neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor pow-

*cous—spoil not his resting place—for a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again.*” When the text, then, is put into its proper connexion, it speaks no such language as Mr. H. intimates. The falling mentioned, is by the oppressive hand of the wicked, and not by sin. Should some good Christian man, “be left” to defraud Mr. H. out of an hundred dollars, he would hardly give him the title of “a just man.”

But let us consider the second text.—‘But God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will, with the temptation, make a way to escape.’ Does this passage “*seem to admit* that real Christians may lose the *life and appearance* of religion, to a lamentable degree?” Where is it shown from the text? Is it because it is said that they were tempted? If so, the same argument will prove that Christ himself was a sinner, for he was “tempted in all points as we are.” But there is no such thing intimated in the text; and we here again see, what shifts our opponents are under the necessity of making, to support their theory. But what does the text mean? Doubtless that God will not suffer the faithful soul to be tempted above that he is able to bear; but, on his part, will make a way to escape. The Apostle is speaking, in this chapter of the Israelites, who fell in the wilderness; he observes,—“And did all eat of that spiritual meat; and did all drink of the same spiritual drink, for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them—and that rock was Christ” Yet, he declares, that “with many of them God was not well pleased, for they were *overthrown* in the wilderness.” Here he goes on to set forth the sins by which they fell; the punishment of which he would turn to a most solemn warning, to the Christian Church. “Wherefore, let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.” They fell by *idolatry*,



*fornication, tempting Christ, and murmuring against God.* He then declares, for their encouragement, that "no temptation had taken them but such as is common to man," and that God is faithful, &c. evidently showing them, that if they apostatized after the same example of unbelief, it would not be from any failure on God's part; as if he had said, if you apostatise it will be your own fault, as it was that of the Israelites; you will not be able to say in extenuation of your guilt, that you were *uncommonly* tempted; for no temptation hath befallen you, but such as is common to man, and God, on his part, will be faithful. That this is the true meaning of the text, taken in its proper connexion, is evident.

The last text in this argument, is found 2 Tim. ii. 18, 19. "Who concerning the truth have erred; saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some. Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal:—The Lord knoweth them that are his.—And let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." The observation of Mr. H. upon this passage is this. "The Apostle Paul, in his epistle to Timothy, admonishes him to shun certain teachers, alleging, that, by their corrupt instructions, they had overthrown the faith of some." And then adds, 'Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal; the Lord knoweth them that are his.' He then goes on and observes:—"From this we have an undoubted right to conclude, that the *faith* which had been overthrown, was not a living, but a cold and dead faith," p. 168. Two of the false teachers, mentioned by the Apostle, were Hymeneus and Philetus, who had erred from the truth, &c. Now suppose, as Mr. H. contends, that the faith which these men overthrew, was not a living, but a cold and dead faith; did they not do an acceptable service to

God, and the souls of men, by overthrowing it? Were such men to be shunned, as false teachers, who tore up "cold and dead faith" by the roots? Would to God there were more of *such* men in the world at the present day, for we have cold and dead faith in abundance, in all denominations.—But suppose this was the true faith, and you have no difficulty. They erred *from the truth*, by teaching false doctrine; and therefore were they to be shunned. But what was the faith which they overthrew? It was faith in a future resurrection, and the way they overthrew it was by teaching that the resurrection was *already passed*.

Every one must see that this is the true sense of the passage. The faith then was a good one—it had for its object the resurrection at the last day. And if the reader will consult the following text, and the chapter from which it is taken, he will form some idea of the value and importance of such a faith: "But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is not Christ risen; and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your *faith is also vain*. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be the dead rise not. For, if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ be not raised, *your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins*." I. Cor. xv. 12.—This then is the faith which Hymeneus and Phileteus overthrew, by teaching that the resurrection was already past.—Is this faith then, which forms the very vitals of the Christian religion, whether in doctrine or experience, a cold and dead faith? Most certainly not. But this faith was overthrown; and therefore proves incontestibly the possibility of final apostacy.

His fourth argument is drawn from the *knowledge* and *power* of God. But in regard to knowledge, he has more

than once acknowledged that it has no influence upon the actions of free agents : (see p. 68, of his work,) of course it can add nothing to the security of the saints without faithfulness on their part. And indeed this is the light in which the Apostle seems to view the text quoted by Mr. H. "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal. The Lord knoweth (or approveth) them that are his." The Apostle then adds, "And, let every one that nameth the name of Christ, depart from iniquity."—i. e. The foundation of that system of salvation established by God, and held forth to the world in the gospel, has this distinguishing characteristic. The Lord knows or approves those who have not suffered their faith to be overthrown. Let all therefore who would bear this mark of divine approbation, depart from all iniquity; otherwise their faith will be overthrown as that of others has been. Yes, the Lord knows them that are his; but are adulterers and murderers his, even though they once were men after God's own heart? But God saith of such—"They shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

All Mr. H. has said of the *power* of God, does not amount to one proof that it is engaged to secure unconditionally the perseverance of the saints; and failing in this, his whole argument falls to the ground. Too much cannot be said in praise of the power of God, which is engaged to secure the happiness of those who *hear* his voice and *follow* him; yet it has not been proved that such characters may not cease to do both; and Mr. H. himself acknowledges that the saints "are capable of sinning and continuing to sin;" and of course are capable of apostatizing. But he strangely supposes that the oath of God mentioned in the sixth of Hebrews, was designed to secure the final perseverance of the saints! Surely could this be proved, nothing more would be necessary; for if the Great Jehovah has put himself under

oath and said, that all who have ever been born again, shall unconditionally persevere, it will be so. But let us see whether he has said any such thing. After giving the Hebrew christians an earnest exhortation and warning (see ver. 4, &c.) against final apostacy, and showing them that it would be *impossible* to renew them again to repentance, the Apostle says, "That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who, through *faith* and *patience*, inherit the promises."—"For, when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swear by himself, saying—surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee." "And so when he had *patiently endured*, he obtained the promise." He then observes, that "an oath among men for confirmation, is to them an end of all strife." "Wherein, God willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise, the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before us." 12 to 18 verse. Now to whom was this oath made? Answer—to Abraham; ver. 13. What did this oath contain? The promise of *personal* and *family* blessings, with a promise of the Messiah, and of spiritual blessings, through him, to all the families of the earth. ver. 14. See also Gen. xxii. 16, 17, 18. On what conditions do men inherit these promises through Christ? Through *faith* and *patience*, and *enduring* as seeing him who is invisible. ver. 15. Who are the heirs of these promises? All who imitate the faith of Abraham, and *fly for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before them*. Gal. iii. 29. "If ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, and *heirs according to the promise*." How long are we sure of inheriting these promises? So long as we continue to "be not slothful, but follow-

ers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." ver. 12. What is the result of this oath and this promise to the faithful soul? "A strong consolation." ver. 18.

But what has this to do with those who have "once been enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come," but have *so far* fallen away as that it is impossible to renew them again to repentance; "seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God *afresh*, and put him to an open shame?" Surely nothing: but the "backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways." I think then with Mr. H. that "It would seem, did we not know how strangely the human mind can turn its eye away from the weight of evidence, that the passages we have now quoted, would remove all doubts, and set this subject among the undoubted and undisputed subjects of the Bible." p. 169. But the human mind is thus capable of prejudice for preconceived opinions, and it is presumed Mr. H. and his brethren will not deny their relation to the *human race*!

The fifth argument of our author is drawn from the angels' rejoicing at sinners' repenting. He asks, "What rational ground can there be for such joy among the inhabitants of heaven when a sinner on earth repents, if it be not certain that every true penitent will persevere, and if that certainty be not known?" I answer—1. Because the conversion of a sinner is the work of God.—2. Because there is a greater prospect that a saint will persevere, than that a sinner will repent and persevere. But says he, "If it be not certain that every true penitent will persevere, their rejoicing is premature, and they may be only preparing themselves for disappointment." p. 170. This sentiment of Mr. H. must arise from limited views of the heavenly state; as though the inhabitants of

heaven are affected with the miscarriages of men in this life. Now the following is refutation enough of this weak argument. Disappointment is invariably attended with misery. But this is inconsistent with a state of perfect happiness: therefore the angels know no such sensations at the misfortunes of men. The same argument used by Mr. H. would prove, that when a Christian arrives in heaven, and finds that his friends are not there whom he expected to see, he will feel the sorrows of disappointment! This however is utterly inconsistent with the nature of that state. This argument then is of no weight.

His sixth and last argument is no more than a reference to several passages of Scripture, which he supposes "speak with plainness and decision on this subject." Some of these passages have already been shown to be perfectly consistent with the possibility of final apostacy. The next in order is Rom. viii. 29—39. As this passage is lengthy, we shall only quote some of the first verses; but the reader is requested to read the whole, and see whether he can find *sin* in the whole catalogue.—"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified."

First.—What is the meaning of "whom he did foreknow?" Does it mean that he predestinated *all* whom he foreknew, to be conformed to the image of his Son? If so, his knowledge being infinite, he certainly knew all men; and if so, he has predestinated all mankind to be conformed to the image of his Son. Now there are but two things more necessary to be proved, and Universalism will be the result.—1. That predestination is absolute; and—2. That all who are once

conformed to the image of the Son of God, shall unavoidably persevere. Here is the connecting link between Universalism and Calvinism! But if this be not the meaning, does it mean that whom he foreknew would comply with the terms of the gospel he predestinated, &c. ? If this be the sense, then election is conditional : and of course our opponents can find no support from this part of the text. Again, "And whom he called, them he also justified." Now whom does he call ? Let Jehovah answer for himself. "Look unto me and be ye *saved, all the ends of the earth* : for I am God, and there is none else." From this, and many other like passages, it is abundantly evident that all mankind are called. Now if exactly the same number who are called are justified, and all who are justified shall infallibly persevere and be *glorified*, it will be impossible for any man to avoid the conclusion, that all mankind will finally be saved ! It is impossible then to make out the Calvinist doctrine from this text. But if it cannot be made to support that theory, what does it mean ? I can only answer for one ; my opinion is this :—"For whom he did foreknow, as truly repenting, believing, and obeying the gospel, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son.—i. e. It was his fore-appointment, or pre-determination, will, and pleasure, that as Christ was they should be in this world : 1 John iv. 17. viz. *holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners* : Heb. vii. 26 ; that they should have in them *the mind that was in him*, and should *walk as he walked*. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them, in due time, he also called, by his word and Spirit. And whom he called—When obedient to the heavenly calling, (Acts xxvi. 19,) he also justified—Accounted righteous, pardoned, and accepted. And whom he justified—Provided they continued in his goodness, Rom. xi. 22, He, in the end, glorified. The Apostle does not af-

firm, either here or in any other part of his writings, that precisely the same number of persons are called, justified, and glorified. He does not deny that a believer may fall away and be cut off, between his calling and his glorification. See the above text in Romans. Neither does he deny, that many are called who are never justified. He only affirms, that this is the method whereby God leads us, step by step, towards heaven. He glorifies none whom he does not first justify, and indeed also sanctify: and he justifies none who are not first called, and obedient to the call.”\*

This explanation at once harmonizes with reason and Revelation; and if it be just, neither these passages, nor those which follow them, can form the least support to the infallible perseverance of the saints.

The next passage to which Mr. H. refers, is Matt. xxiv. 24.—“For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; in so much, that (if *it were* possible) they shall deceive the very elect. I would here inquire whether this text speaks “with plainness and decision,” for the final perseverance of the saints? This is what Mr. H. asserts; but is it not at most but inferential proof? Here, it would seem, our opponents fancy they hear our Lord saying, “If it were possible,” *but it is not*; but unfortunately for them, there are two things to be considered here, which will show that this text can speak nothing decisive for their sentiment.—1. The proposition is hypothetical; which shows that the thing is possible.—2. The words “*it were*” are an interpolation by the translators and belong not to the original text. Read without them it will be as follows.—“That *if possible*, they shall deceive the very elect.” It would indeed be a strange inference from

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\* See Wesley and Benson on the place.



this text, that it is impossible for a true Christian to be deceived ! It would be opening the high-way, to Romish infallibility. The meaning seems to be, that the false Christs and false prophets would use their utmost art to deceive, and hence, to prevent their being deceived, he gave them timely warning, which shows that there was *danger*. If Mr. H. asserts that it was not possible for them to be deceived, he makes our Lord give warning where there was no danger, but if he acknowledges that there was danger, he gives up the point.

The next passage, which Mr. H. supposes speaks with plainness and decision for his doctrine, is Luke, x, 42.—“ But one thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”

In order to understand this text, the following questions may be asked, and answers given. 1. What was the good part which Mary chose ? To “ set at Jesus’s feet, and hear his word ; ” ver. 39. 2. Why did our Lord refuse to take this good part away from her ? Because hearing his word was far better than serving tables ; ver. 40. This every one must see is the true sense of the text ; and, if so, it is so far from being decisive in favor of final perseverance of the saints, that it has no reference to it. The fact is, both Martha and Mary sincerely loved our Lord, but manifested their love in different ways ; Martha, by providing a sumptuous feast, composed of “ many things ; ” ver. 41. But Mary, by setting at his feet, and attending to divine instruction.—Martha thought it hard that Mary had left her to serve alone, and requested the Saviour to bid her help in providing for the entertainment of so worthy a guest. Our Lord, after mildly reproving her, and telling her that but one thing was needful, declares that Mary had chosen that good part, of listening to divine instruction, and that she should not be

disturbed by domestic duties. As if, he had said, such a guest you will not long be favored with; and however sincere your affection may be towards me, you need not labour to provide many things; I and my disciples are plain and unostentatious, and you had far better let one thing suffice, and improve this short visit, as Mary does, for the benefit of the soul. I shall not bid her help you to serve, for this privilege shall not be taken away from her. On a candid examination of the whole subject, I am fully convinced that this is the true sense of the place. But suppose that the good part which Mary chose, were pure and undefiled religion, and that it should never be taken from her; does this prove that she might not squander it away herself? See the case of the prodigal; his was not taken away from him, yet he wasted it with riotous living; and so may we our heavenly substance.

The last text referred to by Mr. H. is Job, xvii, 9. "The righteous, also, shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger." This he supposes is decisive; but is the backslider, in heart, *righteous*; and has he *clean hands*? Surely not. This, then, proves very pointedly, that unless we continue to be righteous, &c. we shall be so far from waxing stronger and stronger, that we shall wax weaker and weaker, till at length God will spew us out of his mouth. It shall now be left for the reader to judge, whether the above passages have any thing in them decisive, in favor of the final perseverance of the saints.

His next question is, "Are there not some passages which clearly imply that saints are in danger of final apostacy?" p. 171. To this question he answers, "there are we are cheerful to acknowledge many, an honest reading of which will leave this impression on the mind." While Mr. H. so cheerfully acknowledges, that it is from an *honest*

reading of the scriptures, that we have formed our opinions upon this subject, it is no more than just, on our part, as cheerfully to acknowledge, that this is an *honest* concession on his. This honest concession, however, is truly unfortunate for the system of Calvinism ; for the unavoidable conclusion from it is, that our opponents have to resort to a dishonest reading of the scriptures, to support it. Observe, I do not say, that they resort to this method, only that this is a fair conclusion from the concession of Mr. H. We trust, however, that it is from an honest reading of the Bible, that we have been conducted to the conclusions we have drawn, and to the opinions which we have formed upon this subject ; and may we ever conduct our enquiries in the same way. O, ye believers in the possibility of final apostacy, whatever words of *man's wisdom* others make use of, be it ever your concern honestly to search the scriptures ; and whatever you find therein clearly revealed, that make an article of your faith. After this honest concession of our author, he proceeds to mention two or three passages, an honest reading of which would leave the impression that it is possible to fall. These however, are but a few out of a host of passages, which are calculated to leave the same impression, if they be honestly read. The first is Ezek. xviii, 24. "But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live ? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned ; in his trespass, that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, *in them shall he die.*" It would seem that the Lord foresaw that some would attempt to establish a contrary doctrine from what an honest reading would naturally teach, and therefore adds, in the next verse but one, "When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth

iniquity, and *dieth in them* ; for his iniquity that he hath done *shall he die.*" The next passage which Mr. H. is cheerful to acknowledge speaks danger, is Heb. vi, 4, 5, 6. "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted of the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance, seeing they crucify to themselves the son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame."

It is truly surprising, that any man in his senses, after reading this text, should, for a moment, hesitate to believe in the possibility of final apostacy. Some have laboured to prove that a person might have all that is here described, and yet be no Christian ! But it is presumed there is no higher state of grace in this life than is here described.—That this is a description of the true Christian, is proved from the consideration that they had repented ; "to renew them again to repentance." But it is asserted, that it is not genuine repentance. I answer—If so, why is it not a good thing, if they have fallen from a defective repentance ? Indeed, if this were so, it will be impossible to renew them to a defective repentance ! Happy fall ! If it is impossible to renew them again to a bad repentance, perhaps they may be renewed to a genuine one ! But others assert that to understand the text, according to *an honest reading*, would prove too much ; it would give backsliders no encouragement to return to God ; for it says it is *impossible* to renew them *again*, &c. To this I reply, that to *such* backsliders, as here described, there is no encouragement. Nothing remains to them, but "a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries." The text, under consideration, does not say but that

a person may be enlightened, fall away, and be recovered again; nor that we may not partake of any of the above mentioned steps of salvation, fall away, and be restored again. Nor yet, that we may not partake of them all, and fall away in some measure, and be restored again. But its meaning seems to be, that if a person goes on in holiness until he has attained unto all that is therein described, and then falls away to all the wickedness there described, it is impossible to renew *such* again to repentance. Now to say that no such case will ever occur, is to say that the Holy Spirit has given unnecessary warning; but if there is danger of final apostacy, then the whole is perfectly plain and intelligible.

As Mr. H. understands repentance to be a fruit of regeneration, he doubtless means by a penitent, a true Christian; but the Scriptures inform us that such may so far fall away, as that it shall be impossible to renew them again unto repentance. The conclusion is unavoidable, a true Christian may totally apostatize on Mr. H's own principle.

The last text mentioned is 1 Cor. ix. 27.—“But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away.” This text he is “cheerful to acknowledge,” if it is read honestly, will leave the impression that there is a danger of final apostacy. The argument I suppose is something like this.—If so holy and faithful a man as the great Apostle of the Gentiles, was in danger of final apostacy, we all have need to watch and pray that we enter not into temptation: and we will all join and say, Amen!

Let us next see how Mr. H. avoids the force of these honest readings. He first acknowledges that these passages “plainly imply, that in one sense, it is possible for Christians to apostatize and perish,” p. 171. I think we may

say that our opponents are gradually coming to the truth, for it was not until of late I believe, that they have began to acknowledge that even in *one sense* it is possible for saints to apostatize and perish. But what is that *one sense*? He tells us that "Saints, when viewed by themselves, *are* liable to fall away." But does Mr. H. mean by their being viewed *by themselves*, that they are viewed aside from the grace of God? If so, I deny that there are any such saints; unless you can form an idea of a graceless saint! Neither does Mr. H., in my opinion, believe any such thing: and this novel turn of his is at best but a mere shuffle of words to evade the force of the above Scripture proofs. The question is not whether saints viewed aside from divine assistance, are liable to fall away, but whether they are not liable so to sin against God, as to apostatize wholly—whether the *righteous man* may not turn away from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and *die in them*.

Again says he, "It is naturally possible," (for the saints to apostatize and perish) "because they are capable of sinning and continuing to sin."—(Same page.) Now suppose that God has unalterably decreed that saints shall finally persevere, have they natural ability to sin and continue to sin? And if so, is it not "naturally possible" for them to break God's decree and be damned, whether he will have them damned or not? These absurdities are sufficient to show the utter inconsistency of the scheme which we oppose. But it is possible for saints to apostatize or it is not. If it is possible, view them as you will, yet they may perish. But if it is not possible, view them as you will, and it is not naturally possible for them to perish. But he goes on—"But we are to remember that our evidence that the saints *will* persevere, is not founded on *their* ability to stand, but on the promise," &c. Be it so, and then it will be impossible to prove

that the saints *will* all persevere ; for God has made no promise whatever of final perseverance, but upon conditions to be performed by them. The whole drift of Revelation is in accordance with this text—" *Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.*" Does not God, in this passage, promise a crown of life, on the condition of faithfulness on the part of the saints ? And does not Mr. H. himself assert that men have natural ability to be saved ? Again, suppose that God has promised that the saints shall persevere, does not Mr. H. contend that they have natural ability to "sin and to continue to sin,"—to "fall away and perish?" If it is "naturally possible," (as he contends) they certainly may ; and then what becomes of the divine promise ? But if the promise is conditional, (as the Scriptures assert) and they fall away, it is because they did not "give diligence to make their calling and election sure." But he attempts to exhibit his views of this point by a reference to the case of the sinner.—"It is generally believed, that sinners, in one sense, are able to repent.—They have all the *natural* powers that are necessary. Of course, it is *naturally possible* for them to repent. But still, it is generally believed, that no sinner *will* ever repent, unless he be drawn by the Spirit."

I think it will admit of a doubt whether the Calvinistic doctrine of *natural ability*, and *moral inability*, is so "generally believed," as Mr. H. insinuates. Indeed, a vast majority of the Christian world are against the sentiment. Did not Mr. H. know this, or did he wish to impress the public with an idea that his sentiments are generally believed ? But to the main point. Stript of its sly and specious dress, the argument of our author seems to be this:—The sinner has *natural ability* to comply with the terms of life, but a *moral inability* which renders it impossible. The saint has *natural ability* to "sin and continue to sin—fall away and per-

ish," but a *moral inability* which renders it impossible.—Sterling divinity indeed! God has secured the final perseverance of the saints, by an unfailing promise; and yet it is *naturally possible* for them to fall away and perish!—Yet he "cheerfully acknowledges" that "an honest reading" of the Scriptures, will leave a very different impression on the mind! Well, let us honestly search the Scriptures; for in them we think we have eternal life, and they are they which testify of Christ.

The next question is the following:—"If it be morally impossible, because God has secured their perseverance, for saints to fall away, how is it proper for him to address them as though they were in danger?" p. 172.

What is contained in this question will confirm what I before asserted, viz. that Mr. H. believes it possible for the saints to perish, and impossible at the same time. In this question he evidently assumes the position, that "it is *morally impossible* for saints to fall away;" and on page 171 he says, "*It is possible* for Christians to apostatize *and perish!*" Reconcile this, you that can find the "philosopher's stone!" But to the question. If it is impossible for saints ever to perish, how is it proper for him to address them as though they were in danger? To avoid the fatal objection contained in this question, he is reduced to the necessity of admitting the possibility of the saints' apostacy; and hence he observes, "What God means to do, or what he designs to do in preserving them, does not affect *their* duty." But suppose he designs to preserve a saint, but that saint should "sin, and continue to sin," (as it is naturally possible) would he be preserved, and perish too? And suppose what God intends to do in preserving the saints, does not affect their *duty*, yet (if the doctrine be true) does it not affect their *danger*? And if so, will the neglect of duty endanger their eternal interest?



If you say it will, you give up the point ; but if you contend that it will not, then two things are true.—1. Mr. H. has not given a satisfactory answer to the question, “ If it is impossible to fall, why is danger represented ? ”—2. It is not necessary for the Christian to perform his duty in order to secure eternal life ; for he is in no danger of losing it though he should not do it. Now let us draw this sentiment into the light of divine Revelation, and see how it will appear. “ The rather, brethren, *give diligence to MAKE your calling and election SURE.* ”—“ For *IF* ye do these things ye shall *never fall.* ” From this passage it appears that duty is absolutely necessary, and of course disobedience is fraught with danger ; and the consequence is, that the security of the saints is conditional.

But another effort by which he attempts to clear his system from the objection, is by asserting, that “ These admonitions are made a means of securing their perseverance.” But does not Mr. H. assert (page 171) that his “ evidence that the saints will persevere is *not founded on their ability to stand ?* ” But here he contends that the representation of danger in the Scriptures, is to effect their perseverance, by making them faithful. We have before seen in what a light this notion represents the divine character—even as using deception to secure the perseverance of the saints !—Representing danger where in reality there is no danger ! He illustrates his views of this subject by a reference to what Paul said to his ship’s company while on his voyage to Rome.—1. That the Apostle had an assurance that there should be no loss of life, and—2. That except they abode in the ship they *could not be saved.* From this it seems our author gathers, that God had unalterably decreed that there should be no loss of life ; and when the decree was like to fail by the departure of the ship-men, Paul was instructed to say what was not

true—that except these abide in the ship *ye cannot be saved*. I say what was not true; for if God had unalterably decreed that there should be no loss of life, their departure out of the ship could not affect the decree of God in the least. Here again the theory of our opponents represents the God of goodness, as saying what was not true, in order to accomplish his decree! But shall we do evil that good may come? God forbid! Here it would seem the sailors had a natural ability to depart out of the ship, and so frustrate the divine decree; but at the same time a moral inability which kept them aboard, and so carried the divine decree into effect! Now can both these be true at the same time?—Certainly not; unless a man can have an ability, and not have it at the same time, which is absurd. But what did the Lord mean when he said there should be no loss of life? I answer—Foreseeing that by the use of means, and his blessing, they would all get safe to land, he revealed it to the Apostle for his encouragement.—He like a rational man, knowing that their safety was conditional, exerted himself by the use of means—God blest his efforts, and the object was attained.

While treating of the subject of future punishment, Mr. H. observes, (p. 198) “To suppose that the meaning or opinion of the writers,” (i. e. of the Bible) “is so different from what their language would *naturally* intimate, is a more bold and impious attack on the character of God, than an open rejection of the whole of Revelation.—It would clearly and undoubtedly show that he had given the Scriptures for the purpose of misleading or of deceiving mankind.”

I fully justify these remarks of our author; and let us examine some of the language of the Scriptures in relation to this subject, and see what it “*naturally intimates*.” “Know ye not that “*ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you.*” If any man defile the temple of

God, *him shall God destroy*; for the temple of God is holy which temple YE ARE." What does this passage *naturally* indicate?—Come, answer honestly.—Does it not "naturally intimate" that there is a possibility of being *destroyed* after we have become temples of the Holy Ghost—yea, *holy* temples? To suppose then that the meaning of the writers of this text is so different from what the language naturally intimates, (and such must be the fact if there is no danger of final apostacy) is a more bold attack upon the character of God, than an open rejection of the whole of Revelation.—It would clearly and undeniably show that he had given the Scriptures for the purpose of misleading or of deceiving mankind. His argument then forms a convincing proof of the possibility of final apostacy.

Again on the same subject he observes, "If metaphors are used by the spirit of inspiration, they are used to exhibit truth; but if they represent truth to be more fearful and appalling than it is, what can it be called but deception?" p. 203. Now I perfectly agree with Mr. H. in his views of metaphors; and let us try a case of his reasoning.—We will take the metaphor found in the fifteenth chapter of John.—"I am the *vine*, ye are the *branches*." "Now ye are *clean* through the word which I have spoken unto you." "Abide *in* me, and I *in* you." "If a man abide not *in* me, he is cast forth as a branch and *is withered*, and men gather them, and they are cast into the fire *and* BURNED." Now according to the very just and cogent reasoning of Mr. H. this metaphor is used by the spirit of inspiration to exhibit *truth*; but if it represent truth to be more fearful and appalling than it is, what can it be called but deception? The conclusion is unavoidable; there is a dangerous possibility of final apostacy—of not *abiding in Christ*—of being *withered*, and of being *burned*!

To close his argument under this question, he observes—  
 “It is to be observed, that all those passages, which intimate a possibility that Christians *may* come short of heaven, are hypothetical—‘*If they shall fall away,*’—‘*When a righteous man,*’ &c. Does Mr. H. mean, by this specious reasoning, that, *if*, proves a thing to be impossible? Does not a hypothetical proposition represent a thing as uncertain; and of course, that it may or may not be? But suppose that *if* proves a thing to be impossible; let us try a case or two.—  
 “*If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die.*” Ah! *if* we do—but we cannot; for *if* proves a thing to be impossible!—  
 “*But if ye, through the spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.*” Ah! *if* we do—but we cannot; for *if* proves an impossibility! “*If ye do these things ye shall never fall.*” Ah! *if* we do—but we cannot; and therefore we shall fall! We need no more to show the absurdity of his reasoning. But he says, “the promise of perseverance, has none of this uncertainty attached to it.” p. 173.—  
 Can it be possible that Mr. H. has never read 2d Peter, chap. i, 10? “*For if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.*” Or does he deny that this is a promise of perseverance? Again—“*If thou continue in his goodness, otherwise thou, also, shalt be cut off.*” This assertion, then, of Mr. H. is founded in a mistake. His assertion, also, that *all* those passages which imply a possibility that saints may fall away and perish, are hypothetical, will be found to be incorrect, if we attend to the translation of Heb. vi, 6, by Dr. Macknight, as quoted by Dr. A. Clarke. “*If they shall fall away.*” *Και παραπεσοντας, and having fallen away.* ‘I can express my own mind,’ (says the Doctor,) ‘on this translation, nearly in the words of Dr. Macknight.’ ‘The participles, *φωτισθεντας, who were enlightened, γευσαμενους, have tasted, and γενηθεντας, were made partakers, being aorists,*

are properly rendered by our translators *in the past time*; wherefore, *παρῆσθοντες*, being an aorist, ought, likewise, to have been translated in the *past time*, *HAVE fallen away*.—Nevertheless, our translators, following *Beza*, who, without any authority from ancient manuscripts, has inserted in his version, the word *si, if*, have rendered this clause, *IF they fall away*, that this text might not appear to contradict the doctrine of the *perseverance of the saints*. But as no translator should take upon him to add to, or alter the scriptures, for the sake of any favorite doctrine, I have translated *παρῆσθοντες*, in the *past time*, *have fallen away*, according to the true import of the word, as standing in connexion with the other aorists in the preceding verses.’

“Dr. Macknight was a Calvinist; and he was a thorough scholar and an honest man; but, professing to give a *translation of the epistle*, he consulted not his creed, but his candor. Had our translators, who were excellent and learned men, leaned less to their own peculiar creed in the present authorised version, the Church of Christ, in this country; would not have been so agitated and torn as it has been with polemical divinity. It appears from this, whatever sentiment may gain or lose by it, that there is a fearful possibility of *falling away from the grace of God*; and if this scripture did not say so, there are many that do say so. And were there no scripture express on this subject, the nature of the present state of man, which is a state of *probation*, or *trial*, must necessarily imply it. Let him who most assuredly standeth, take heed lest he fall.”

We now come to the last question under this head.—It runs thus :—“Does not this doctrine encourage sloth?”

In labouring to obviate the objection contained in this question, he asks, “What Christian that is longing to be more and more conformed to the image of his Lord, would

draw from this promise" (1 Cor. x. 13) "licence, or encouragement to sin?" p. 173. I answer—No one; for it is not from the Bible that men draw encouragement to sin, but from the doctrines of Calvinism. The passage above referred to, stands so closely connected with the description of a vast number of apostacies, that no one can rationally gather from it any thing more than that there is no *necessity* of falling. Neither do we suppose that the Christian who is "longing to be more and more conformed to God," is as likely to be affected with the doctrine we oppose, as those who are measurably backslidden from God. Those who, according to Mr. H., "are left to commit very aggravating sins," are most likely to plead his sentiment as an excuse for continuing in sin, and neglecting their duty. We do not suppose that so many do openly affirm this, as there are who do it practically. Thousands of backsliders no doubt are to this day living in the utter neglect of their duty to God, and their fellow-men, from the influence of the Calvinistic system. Attempt to point out the danger of their condition, and they immediately reply, that they have a *hope*; for so many years since they were converted to God, and lived for some time in the enjoyment of peace with God, &c. and that they shall never be left to final apostacy, &c.—That God has only "left them to occasional imperfections and to commit very aggravating sins;" and that although they should commit adultery and murder, they would only "lose for a time the *appearance* of piety!" I have more than my own word for it, that these are the legitimate consequences of our author's scheme. All such however as lean upon this broken reed of infallible perseverance, will find to their eternal confusion and disappointment, that none have the promise of eternal life, but such as are "faithful unto death." But Mr. H. thinks that the inference which the Apostle draws,

1 Cor. x. 14, is from the preceding verse; but if he or any one else will read with care the whole of the preceding part of the chapter, I think they will find cause to believe, that the 14th verse, is an inference from the whole; and especially from the 7th verse. "Neither be ye *idolaters* as were some of them," &c. ver. 14, "Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from *idolatry*."

Again, he supposes that the objection under consideration, "rests upon mistaken views of the grace of God in its influence on the heart.—It supposes that the Christian is not delighted with the service of God, in itself considered," &c. I think this statement of Mr. H. arose from mistaken views of his opponents' doctrine; for no one that I ever conversed with of our sentiment, held up any such doctrine, that the *true* Christian is not delighted with the service of God, in itself considered. No, they are those who live in the "commission of very aggravating sins," after having been born again, who are not delighted with the service of God, in itself considered. We believe that every faithful Christian is pleased with his Master and his work; but this does not touch the point, which is, whether the doctrine of infallible perseverance does not encourage sloth. We say it does; and our opponents have not as yet proved to the contrary. But he supposes that if the sentiment should prevail in heaven, that because God had promised final perseverance, it should be an encouragement to sloth,—“it would freeze every heart, and close every song, and revive the storms and contentions of our world!” p. 174. Ah! *were* it to prevail there; but we are happy in the reflection that the doctrine of our opponents does not prevail in heaven. It may have been imbibed there once, when the angels fell; but the sad examples of so many who were in a far safer condition than the best Christian on earth, and yet by transgression fell and

left their own habitation, sufficiently warns them in heaven of the danger of sin. It may be that a belief, that because God had promised them assistance, they could never fall, led them to be slothful, and so proved their ruin; but of this every one must judge for himself.

We shall make but one quotation more. "They must be convinced, that if they have apostatized, they never were the children of God."—Same page. And so then, if a man falls from his horse, he must be convinced, that he was never on horseback in his life! Wonderful reasoning indeed!—But Mr. H. does not mean, if the *Christian* apostatize, &c. but if the *sinner* apostatize, *he* must be convinced that he was never a child of God. Sinners apostatize!—From what? From God? They never were his children.—But they thought they were, and were deceived. Then they apostatized from their deception, Happy event! Would to God all deceived persons might apostatize in the same manner. But the controversy is not about the apostacy of sinners;—this therefore is only a shift of our opponents. But was David's apostacy by adultery and murder, an evidence that he was never a man after God's own heart? Was Peter's apostacy by lying, cursing and swearing, an evidence that he was never a follower of Christ? Was the apostacy of Judas, by covetousness, theft, treason, and self-murder, an evidence that he was not once given of the Father to Christ, John xvii. 12—that he was not Christ's own familiar friend, Ps. xli. 9—that he was not empowered to preach the gospel, heal diseases, and cast out devils, Matt. x. 1.....9—that he had not obtained part of that ministry and apostleship from which he by transgression fell, Acts i. 25—that he had not with the rest a promise of setting upon one of the twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel? I say, was his

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apostacy after all this, an evidence that he was never a follower of Christ? Certainly not.

We shall now present the reader with a few of the arguments in favour of the possibility of the final apostacy of the saints.

1. It is argued from the probationary state of man throughout the present life. By a state of probation "we mean," (in the words of Mr. H.) "a time in which we are allowed to act on trial for the retributions of a future world." "*It is a time in which we may choose life or death; with the assurance that according to our choice will be our future condition.*" p. 183. This is perhaps a good definition of a probationary state. This being the state of all men during the present life, Christians are acting on trial as well as others, for the retributions of a future world; and may choose either life or death, with the assurance that according to *their* choice, will be their condition forever. This doctrine we have already seen, is utterly inconsistent with that state of confirmation, in which our opponents represent the saints. If they cannot finally apostatize, they cannot be accountable for their sins after conversion; for they receive no punishment for their sins here or hereafter. Neither will it mend the matter to say that the backslider is punished in the present life; for this will be mingling the scenes of probation and trial, with those of retribution, against which Mr. H. himself argues. So long therefore as we are in a probationary state, and are accountable for our moral conduct, so long we are liable to apostatize and perish.

2. Nearly if not all those passages which are supposed to speak of the final perseverance of the saints, are accompanied with conditions expressed or implied. "My sheep *hear* my voice, I know them, and they *follow* me; and I give unto *them* eternal life, and *they* shall never perish," &c. Here,

as we before observed, the conditions upon which this promise is suspended, are two; hearing his voice, and following him. Let the saints continue to do these things, and there is no danger. All that were given of the Father to Christ are not finally saved; for he says, "Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost *but the son of perdition.*" John xvii. 12. This shows that the above declaration, "Those that thou gavest me," does not absolutely secure the salvation of any man. See also Ps. ii. 8.—"Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." If then all that are given to Christ, are saved, then all are saved. This however is not the case, and therefore the promise is conditional. Again,—"*If ye do these things ye shall never fall.*" 2 Pet. i. 10.

3. There are many examples of apostacy recorded in Scripture. Saul, the first king of Israel, was an example of *final* apostacy. The account of his conversion is found 1 Samuel, tenth chapter. There, after having an interview with a holy prophet, it is said, "*The Spirit of God came upon him, turned him into another man, and gave him another heart.*" And the next we hear of him he is among the prophets of God, prophesying, and bearing the reproach of a servant of God.—"Is Saul also among the prophets?" Had not this man finally apostatized, or were such an experience told under different circumstances, no doubt but Mr. H. would gladly receive the subject of it into his church; but because he fell from grace, O he never had any grace! Saul however was no doubt a Christian; nevertheless he fell through *pride, envy, malice, rage, and self-murder*: and, "No murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." David was an instance of *total* apostacy, though not of final. His case we have already considered. The character of Solomon

presents a melancholy example of *final* apostacy. His case is considered at large by Dr. Clarke, in his closing remarks upon 1 Kings, eleventh chapter :—

“Hitherto we have looked only at the bright side of Solomon’s character ; we must now take a much less satisfactory view of this singular man : one in whom every thing great, glorious, wise, and holy, and every thing little, mean, foolish, and impious, predominated by turns. He forsook the God of his mercies in a great variety of ways.—

1. “Whatever may be thought of the step, in a political point of view, he most assuredly went out of the way of God’s providence, and acted contrary to his law, in making *affinity with Pharaoh’s daughter*. The sacred writers frequently refer to this—and it is never mentioned with approbation ; it is rather associated with circumstances that place it in a reprehensible point of view. She was doubtless an *idolater* ; and the question of her becoming a *proselyte*, is far from being satisfactorily settled. I believe she was the first means of drawing off his heart from the true God.

2. “His expensive buildings, obliging him to have recourse to a system of oppressive taxation, was another flaw in his character. Though with great zeal, and honourable industry, and at great expense, he built a temple for the Lord, which he completed in seven years ; yet the expense here was little in comparison of what was incurred by *his own house*, called the *House of the Forest of Lebanon*, in which he spent incredible sums, and consumed nearly *thirteen* years ; almost twice the time employed in building the temple at Jerusalem. This would have had no evil operation, provided he had not been obliged to impose heavy taxes on his subjects, which produced an almost universal disaffection. Add to this, he had a most expensive household : *one thousand* women, part wives, part mistresses, would require im-

mense riches to support their pomp, and gratify their ambition. The people, therefore, justly complained of an establishment, which, notwithstanding the riches brought into the country, must be both odious and oppressive.

3. "He began his reign by an inauspicious act, the death of his brother Adonijah. This was a sin against God and nature; and no art of man can ever wash out its guilt. If *state policy* required it, which is very questionable, what had that to do with the *feelings of humanity*, and the *love of God*? On no pretence whatever is Solomon justified in this act.

4. "His inordinate love of women: he had no doubt formed matrimonial alliances with all kingdoms and neighbouring states, by taking their *sisters* and *daughters* to be his wives, to the fearful amount of no less than *seven hundred*! Politicians may endeavour to justify these acts, by asserting that in the eastern countries, they were matters of a sound policy, rather than an argument of the prevalence of an irregular and unbridled passion. Let this stand for its value; but what can such apologists say for the *additional three hundred concubines*, for the taking of whom no such necessity can be pleaded? But, even allowing that state policy might require such extensive alliances, what are we to say to the flagrant breaches of a most positive law of God? Most solemnly and most authoritatively had He said, that His people should not give their daughters to the heathen, nor take the daughters of the heathen to be their wives; lest they should turn their hearts away from serving the Lord. In the face of this most positive declaration, Solomon took wives of the most idolatrous of the surrounding nations; who succeeded, according to what was foretold, in turning his heart away from God.

5. "He became an idolater—he worshipped 'Ashtaroth,

the Venus of the Sidonians—Milcom, the abomination of the Amonites—Chernosh, the abomination of the Moabites—and Moloch, the abomination of the children of Ammon.' He did more; he built a temple to each of these; 'and to all the Gods of all his strange wives, which burned incense, and sacrificed unto their Gods. I. Kings, xi. 5—8.

6. By this time we may suppose that the light of God had entirely departed from his mind. He who knew so well the true God, now served him not; or, if he did, it was in conjunction with those idols; thus bringing the Supreme Being on a level with demons, or the figments of impure hearts and disordered fancies. We need not wonder at the tale of the mighty Sampson, betraying his life's secret in the lap of Delilah; or of the unconquerable Hercules, handling the distaff among the maids of Omphale, queen of Lydia;—when we see the son of David, the once well beloved of the Lord, the wisest of human beings, for the love of his *millenery* of wives and concubines, erecting temples to devils, and burning incense to them that were no Gods; not considering that an idol is nothing in the world. To what an indescribable state of blindness and fatuity must this man have been brought before he could have been capable of such acts as these! O Lucifer, son of the morning, how art thou fallen!

7. "I have already hinted that Solomon's oppressive taxation laid the foundation of that discontent that shortly after his death produced the separation of Israel and Judah; also the long and ruinous wars which drenched these states in blood, and was doubtless the cause that ten-twelfths of the Jewish people became idolaters; which crime was punished by the just judgments of God, by the Babylonish captivity, which lasted seventy years; and by the carrying away of the ten Israelitish tribes by the Assyrians, who are lost from the map of the universe, and no longer numbered among the children of men!

8. "What greatly aggravates the whole of this most dismal tale is, that this strange defection from God, truth, reason and common sense, was persisted in to his old age ; or, that in his old age, meaning undoubtedly his latter days, his wives turned away his heart from God. But his idolatry must have been of *many years* standing ; he meddled with it in his connexion with the princess of Egypt ; each of his idolatrous wives, in succession, increased the propensity ; to chastise him for this very idolatry, the Lord stirred up an adversary unto him, *Hadad*, the Edomite, and *Rezon*, the son of Eliadah, who was an adversary to Israel all the days of Solomon,—1 Kings, xi, 14, 25,—which surely intimates that this idolatry was not the sin merely of his *old age*, as, to chastise him for it, Rezon was an adversary to Israel all his days, and, as Solomon reigned forty years, we may fairly presume that a principal part of that time was spent in idolatrous practices.

9. "This dismal account has a more dismal close still ; for, in the same place, in which we are informed of his *apostacy*, we are informed of his *death* ; without the slightest intimation that he ever repented and turned to God. It is true, that what is wanting in *fact*, is supplied by *conjecture* ; for it is firmly believed that 'he did repent, and wrote the *Book of Ecclesiastes*, after his conversion, which is a decided proof of his repentance.' I am sorry that I cannot strengthen this opinion ; of which I find not the shadow of a proof. 1. The book of Ecclesiastes, though it speaks much of the vanity of the creature ; yet it speaks little or nothing of the *vanity*, or *sin*, of *idolatry*. 2. It is not the *language* of a man who was recovering from a state of the most awful backsliding. Is there any direct *confession of sin* in it ? Is there any thing in it like the *penitential confessions* of his father ? or like the *lamentations* of Jeremi-

ah ? Is there any where to be heard in it the *sighing of a broken heart*, or strong crying and tears to deprecate the justice, and implore the mercy, of a deeply offended God ? Does it any where exhibit the language of a *penitent*, or expressions suitable to the state and circumstances of this supposed penitent king of Israel ? Excellent as it is of its kind, is it any thing more than a valuable collection of experimental ethics, relative to the *emptiness of the creature*, and the folly of earthly pursuits and worldly anxieties ?—

3. “Nor is it even past doubt that Solomon wrote this book; it certainly does in several places, bear evidences of times posterior to those of Solomon. Eminent scholars have discerned a deterioration in the *style* from the pure classical Hebrew ; with an admixture of exotic terms, that did not exist in the Hebrew language, previously to the Babylonish captivity. But supposing that they are mistaken here, I still contend that it is not the language of a penitent soul. 4. It has been supposed, that as Solomon was a type of Christ, it is not likely that he has finally perished. To this, I answer,

1. I know not that Solomon was a type of Christ. The reference to Cant. iii, 7, viii, 11, 12, is, to me, no proof whatever of the point. 2. Were it even otherwise, this would be no proof his repentance, when the scriptures are silent on the subject. The *brazen serpent* was a type of Christ, John iii, 14, and was held in great veneration, for a considerable time, among the Jews ; but when it became an *incitement to idolatry*, it was called *nehushtan*, a *brazen trifle*, taken down, and destroyed ; 2 Kings, xviii, 4. Typical persons, and typical things, may perish as well as others.—The antitype, alone, will infallibly remain. Finally, there seems every evidence that he died in his sins. His crimes were greatly aggravated—he forsook the Lord, who had appeared unto him twice—his wives turned away his

heart, in his old age—there is not a single testimony, in the Old or New Testament, that intimates that he died in a safe state. That awful denunciation, of Divine Justice, stands point-blank in the way of all contrary suppositions; “If thou forsake the Lord, he will cast thee off FOR EVER,”—1 Chron. xxviii, 9. He did forsake the Lord, and he forsook him in his very last days, and there is no evidence that he ever again clave to him.—*Ergo*—

“Reader, let him that standeth, take heed lest he fall; not only foully, but finally. Certainly, unconditional final perseverance, will find little support in the case of Solomon.—He was once most incontrovertibly in grace. He lost that grace, and sinned most grievously against God. He was found in this state in his old age. He died, as far as the scriptures inform us, without repentance. Even the doubtfulness in which the bare letter of the scripture leaves the eternal state of this man, is a blast of lightning to the siren song of ‘once in grace, and still in grace,’—‘once a child and a child forever.’

“I shall close these observations with the account given by Abul Farage, an Arabic writer, of the thirteenth century, in his work, entitled *The History of the Dynasties*, page 55. ‘But in this Solomon transgressed, because towards the end of his life, he took other women of foreign nations, besides the daughter of Pharaoh; nations with whom God had forbidden the children of Israel to form matrimonial alliances; but leaning towards their Gods, he worshipped their idols. In the *thirty-fourth* year of his reign he built a house, for idols, in the mount which is opposite to Jerusalem, and the length of it was one hundred cubits—its breadth fifty—and its height thirty. He made, also, for himself, golden shields, and a brazen sea, supported on the horns of brazen oxen. God reproveth him for his infidelity, and gave



him, for punishment in this world, that he took away from his son the greater part of the kingdom. Moreover, the duration of his reign was *forty years*; and *he died without repentance*, and was buried in the sepulchre of his father David."

Judas, also, we have seen, was an example of final apostacy. In addition to these, we are presented with a host of Israelites, "who had all eat of that spiritual meet, and drank of the same spiritual rock, which was Christ." "Yet we see, that they could not enter in, because of unbelief."—And the Apostle warns every Christian, "lest he *fall after the same example of unbelief.*"

4. The scriptures are full of cautions and warnings against final apostacy. Should we begin to quote, I know not where we should end, for the Bible abounds with them. If there is no danger, they cannot one of them be understood. "If any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, *God shall take away his part out of the book of life.*" Rev. xxii, 19. "Let us fear lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." "Take heed lest the light that is in you become darkness," &c.

5. The scriptures speak expressly to this point. In addition to the numerous passages which we have had occasion to introduce in the course of this examination, the following speak the same unequivocal language "And thou Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father; and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind; if thou seek him he will be found of thee, but if thou *forsake him, he will cast thee off FOREVER.*" 1. Chron. xxviii, 9. "But he that lacketh these things, is *blind*, and hath *forgotten* that he was purged from his old sins." 2 Peter, i, 9. As our opponents will not probably contend, that a man can

forget what he never knew, they will not assert, that the character in question had not been purged from his old sins ; yet this character is said to be *blind*, &c. Again—"For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, *the latter end, is worse with them than the beginning.*" "For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them." 2 Peter, ii, 20, 21. "So then because thou art luke-warm, and neither cold nor hot, *I will spew thee out of my mouth.*" Rev. iii, 16. See, also, Heb. vi, 3 to 7—Rev. ii, 5 to 16—Gal. vi, 9—Heb. ii, 1 ; and iv, 1 to 11 ; xii, 15 to 25 ; x, 26 to 29, &c.

## APPENDIX.

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IN refuting the errors of Calvinism, we sometimes have occasion to mention what those doctrines are which are held by our opponents; and it is not unfrequently the case, that the private members of those churches, deny that they as a people, believe any such thing. And it is probably true, that a large majority of them do not; and this is rendered the more likely—1. As there appears to be but few of the *printed* articles of that denomination in circulation among the people.—2. As Congregational churches (as far as I can learn) are generally formed upon articles drawn up at the time, and varied in language, according to the times, popular views, &c.\* The articles however from which the following extracts are made, doubtless contain the faith of Addison Consociation of Congregational Ministers. It is often asserted, that those ministers do not believe in the peculiarities of the Calvinistic system; and their preaching free salvation, is adduced as evidence of the fact: but that they do believe those doctrines, whatever they preach in times of revival, the following extracts will sufficiently show.

If they are willing the public should know in what they do believe, they will not object to these extracts; and if they do not, yet we certainly do; and therefore take the liberty to make them. These articles, from the dates, appear to have

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\* A minister of that order, not a year since, remarked to me, that two men might sit down to draw up articles upon which to form a church, and the one might have *seven* articles, and the other *nine*; and differently worded, but containing the same thing in substance, they would both be acceptable!

been first drawn up and adopted June 7th, 1798 ; and re-adopted June 17th, 1818, as the following extracts will show :—

*“ Articles of Addison Consociation.”*—“ We therefore, Delegates from Churches in the Western Districts of Vermont, and parts adjacent, met in Convention this 7th day of June, A. D. 1798, do propose to the Churches which we represent, to unite and walk together in all acts of visible fellowship and union,” &c.

The other date is found in the following clause :—

“ The following is recommended to the observance of the Churches, in pursuance of a vote of Addison Consociation of June 17th, 1818.” p. 12.

The next will show, that all the Churches which they admit into union with them, must adopt their sentiments.—It runs thus :—

“ And we agree that those Churches *only* be admitted into union, which *shall adopt* the following, as we think them contained in the Holy Scriptures.” p. 2.

We shall now see what those doctrines are, which every Congregational church must adopt, which is taken into union with the Consociation.—

*“ SEC. III.—On the Decrees and Providence of God.”*

1. “ The decrees of God, are his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his own will ; whereby, for his own glory, *he hath fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass.*”

2. “ All events that ever have or ever will take place, are most certainly connected with the decrees of God, or the plan of divine Providence ; yet so as not in the least to interfere with the freedom and agency of the creature, or destroy the connexion between the means and the end.”

3. “ God executes his decrees in the works of creation,

providence, and redemption, so that all events, however dark and mysterious to mortal view, will infallibly issue in the glory of God, and the advancement of his cause."

4. "God's works of providence are his most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures, in all their actions."

Here the Consociation assert, that God hath fore-ordained *whatsoever comes to pass*. But it has come to pass that Adam sinned and fell; therefore, (according to them,) God decreed the fall of man! Yet it is certain that God did forbid their fall on pain of eternal death! The same argument will apply to every sin.—Not a crime, however heinous in itself, or injurious to mankind, or offensive in the sight of God, but what Calvinism makes God the author of by his decree. Believe this, you that can. How effectually does this article make God the author of sin! Cast your thoughts around you, and see the abominations that make desolate in our world;—behold the infidelity, pride, anger, malice, profane swearing, Sabbath-breaking, drunkenness, adultery, murder, lying, cheating and stealing, which are so prevalent in the land.—These, and all other things contrary to godliness, are strictly forbidden by the word of God; and yet all these the Consociation assert were fore-ordained by God! He unalterably decreed they should exist, and yet forbade the only acts by which they could have an existence! viz. transgression. God commands men to defeat his own decrees; for, according to them, he decreed that men should steal, and then forbids them to steal! He decreed that men should lie, cheat, get drunk, and then forbids them to do either! *Elas!* what will men not believe when blinded by a violent attachment to a favourite creed!

Again say they, "All events will *infallibly* issue in the glory of God, and the *advancement* of his cause." What

a consolation this must be to the devil, and indeed to all his children; for while the one is seeking for, and planning the destruction of souls, and the other is transgressing the divine law, they can reflect (if the Consociation are not mistaken) that, as bad as they are, they are glorifying God, and advancing his cause!—Yea, and what they do is “for the *greatest possible good* of the universe!” Now if this sentiment be true, the devil and wicked men are doing more for the glory of God and the advancement of his cause, than they could do in any other way.—They are answering the end of their creation exactly; and what more do the children of God do? And yet they are to be rewarded with everlasting life as the free gift of God for answering the end of their creation, while the devil and wicked men are to be rewarded with everlasting death as the gift of God’s free wrath for answering so admirably the end of their creation! According to Calvinism, it was as necessary to have rebellion in the kingdom of God, as obedience; both were necessary for the perfection of the great whole: Why then the rewards of servants equally true to their various trusts, so widely different? Ah! it is but too true that the system is fraught with dangerous error.

SEC. V.—“*On the fall of Man, and consequent misery.*”

1. “Our first parents, IN CONSEQUENCE OF THE ETERNAL DIVINE PURPOSE, *did as voluntary agents*, fall from that holy and happy state in which they were created, by sinning against God.”

2. “All mankind are the descendants of apostate Adam, and are, BY DIVINE CONSTITUTION, the subjects of total *moral depravity*.”

Here the Consociation would have us believe, that man fell in consequence of the *eternal divine purpose* or decree, and yet that he fell as a *voluntary agent*! He fell by *sinning against God*, and yet he is a sinner by *divine constitution*!

These are both true, if propositions self-contradictory are true, and not otherwise.

SEC. VI.—5. “The covenant of grace *absolutely secures* to believers, perseverance in faith, and obedience to eternal life.”

And yet one of the Consociation declares, that “It is possible for Christians to sin, and continue to sin;—to apostatize and perish !”

SEC. VIII.—“On Election, Reprobation, and Effectual Calling.”

1. “God did, from eternity, *particularly and definitely*, for the manifestation of his glory, predestinate and choose some angels and men, to everlasting life.”

2. “The ground or foundation of God’s choice, or election, as to man, was not the foresight of the faith and good works of the elect, or any moral distinction.—The difference as to attention, or compliance with the gospel is the *fruit*, not the *ground* of his choice, or election.”

We shall all agree, I think, with the Consociation, that the ground and foundation of God’s choice, or election, of any of the human race, is not the foresight of their good works.—No doubt his *love* is the ground and foundation of all his mercies to our fallen world; but the Consociation have not as yet proved, that God’s choice, or election of any was not from a foresight of the compliance of the sinner with the terms of the gospel *as the condition*. But what are the conditions of election unto salvation?—1. Repentance.—“Men and brethren, what shall we do?” ‘*Repent, &c. for the remission of sins.*’ Acts ii. 38.—2. Faith.—“Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.’ Acts xvi. 30, 31.—“Except ye repent, ye shall *all perish*.”—“He that believeth not shall be damned.” Now if these moral exercises, as the Consociation as-

sert, are the fruits only of election, then it is impossible for any to repent and believe, unless they are first elected ;—the non-elect are damned for not repenting when it is out of their power, for want of being elected ! But we shall see more of this absurdity shortly. This is but one out of the many legitimate consequences of this God-dishonouring scheme of theology.

2. "Though the reason why God chooses some, while he *passes by others*, is not any moral distinction in them ; yet the sovereignty of God is directed by wise and holy reasons."

Here, it seems, the Consociation cannot determine what those reasons are, which direct the sovereignty of God. And indeed, were he the author of all which they attribute to him, there doubtless could be no reason given, nor any discovered in any of the divine dispensations. But we are happy in the consideration, that God has developed the reasons which direct his sovereignty. "He that *believeth* shall be saved, and he that *believeth not* shall be damned."

4. "Though some men were not elected to be the subjects of *special grace*, and consequently **WERE REPROBATED** ; yet the offers of life are *free and sincere* TO ALL ; nor does *reprobation* militate against the *agency, freedom, or natural ability* of THE NON-ELECT, to comply with the *gospel offers* ; but the *Holy Spirit* frequently *strives with them*, and after communicating much intellectual light, leaves them to go on in opposition to *gospel grace*, to their own destruction."

What a motley mixture of absurdities are here ! In a former quotation, a compliance with the terms of the gospel is the fruit of election ; and yet here, the want of such election, (or, what is the same thing, reprobation,) does not militate against the *agency, freedom, or natural ability*, of



the reprobates, to *comply* with the gospel offers ! Though unalterably reprobated, yet they can be saved !! Again—The Holy Spirit *strives* with the reprobates ! And pray for what ? That they may be saved ? What ! laboring to save them when he has unalterably decreed they shall be damned ? And think you he will be successful ? Alas ! what error ! But more still ; for, after communicating to them much light, *leaves them* to go on in opposition to the gospel to their own destruction !

5. “ All those who are ordained to eternal life, are by the *sovereign, immediate, and all powerful* agency of the Spirit of God, *effectually* called in time, to the obedience of faith, to justification and eternal life.”

What do the Consociation mean by an *effectual call* ?—Do they not mean by it, a call which is irresistible ? And, if so, is not the reason why the reprobates do not come to Christ, because they were not *effectually called* ? And if so, where is the blame of their not coming ? But what are the reprobates called *ineffectually* for ? Is it to make a show of justice in their final condemnation ? Or to aggravate their condemnation at the last day ? And think you that this argument will be availing, while the call was not only ineffectual, but was never designed to take effect ?—Will the Almighty have no better way to vindicate the throne of his justice before an assembled universe ? If not I tremble for his throne, and for his character too ! But blessed be God, we need entertain no such fears ; for “ *This is the condemnation, that light has come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light.*”

SEC. IX.—“ *On the graces and fruits of the spirit.*”

2.—“ Repentance unto life, is a saving grace, *which flows from supreme love to God.*”

According to this statement no man can repent, until he

has supreme love to God ; but 'all men have not supreme love to God ; therefore, all men *cannot repent* And yet, God has "commanded all men every where to repent."—According to the Consociation therefore, God has commanded some men to do what is out of their power ! But they may say, true, but they ought to love God and then they might repent. Very well—but can they love God, till they are *effectually* called ? And does it not then amount to the same thing ? They do not repent, because they have not supreme love to God—and they have not supreme love to God, because they are not effectually called—and they are not effectually called, because they were not, from eternity, foreordained to everlasting life—and they were not foreordained to everlasting life, not because God foresaw their unbelief, and consequent obstinacy, but because he saw proper to send them to hell ! !

Here we see that the Calvinistic scheme, throws the whole of the blame back upon the Author of our being—and effectually makes him the author of sin ! Finally, they represent all such to be guilty of "*heresy*," who do not subscribe to the

"Absolute and universal Government of God, *as expressed in the preceding articles of Faith*," &c. Chap. iii, sect. vi.

A large majority of the Christian world, according to this statement, are considered by the Consociation as heretics !—How singular, that they should at times manifest so much gospel fellowship for heretics ! Would this be so were it not for a hope of advantage ? I trow not—for it is most manifest in times of revival.

The reasons why I do not take up the subject of the "Christian Church," are the following :—

1. *There is no specific form of church government, laid*

down by Christ or his Apostles. 2. Mr. H. allows all the officers in the Church for which we contend. 3. Whenever God raises up a body of Christians in the world, I believe that the ministers of that body have all the necessary authority to execute the peculiar functions of their office, with due subordination to the rules and regulations of that body. Yet, order and regulation should be observed, and innovations prevented. Every one who starts up with a new system, is not to be regarded or despised, but his system candidly examined. No new system should be adopted, while the old is owned and blest of God in the advancement of his cause; and while the ministers of that order keep their proper places, and remain humble, zealous, and faithful; and while the laity love, respect and support their ministers.

FINIS.













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